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How One Woman Loved

Or, The Hungerford Manor Tragedy

By Emma Howard Wight

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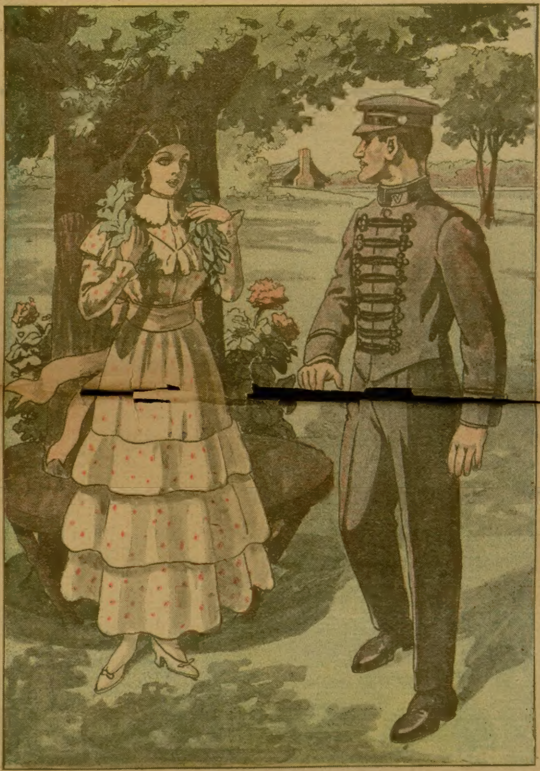


CHAPTER I.

EUGENE HUNGERFORD had arrived a day sooner than had been expected, and there was no one to meet him at the station.

"I'll send one of my boys to Hungerford Manor, Mr. Eugene," offered Lawson, the station master.

"Thank you, Lawson, but I think I'll walk," said Eugene.

"Very good, sir."

Lawson stopped to look admiringly after the tall, broad-shouldered, erect young fellow in the cadet uniform of the Virginia University, as he walked briskly away.

"Mighty good-looking!" was the station master's comment.

Eugene Hungerford had the blond beauty of a viking. He was 23 years of age, and just a few days before had been graduated with high honors from the University of Virginia.

It was a beautiful day in June, and the white road along which Eugene walked was bordered with wild roses and honeysuckle, scenting the warm air [illegible] lifted his fair, boyish face to the soft, perfumed air and golden sunlight, and smilingly murmured aloud:

"It is good to be alive!"

He was not long in covering the distance of two miles that lay between Hungerford Manor and the station. Massive gates opened upon the turnpike, a wide avenue, along which were splendid, century-old trees, led to the grounds surrounding the house, a rambling gray stone house, at the back of which rippled the waters of the Shenandoah River. At the right of the house were the slave quarters, like a small village, with four hundred or more slaves. Extending for miles along the river were acres of richly cultivated land, the great wheatfields like a green, billowing sea.

The grounds were decked in their spring beauty. White and purple lilacs, roses and orange blossoms rioted in beauty, drenching the air with perfume. Around the banks of the river were great beds of white water lilies.

Eugene walked more slowly after passing thru the gates, drawing in great breaths of the perfumed air. Quite suddenly he came upon a girl seated upon a rustic bench among the orange blossoms. She was so beautiful that Eugene involuntarily paused and stood gazing upon her, lost in wonder. She had great velvety dark eyes full of a pathos which served to intensify their loveliness. Her face was an exquisite oval, cream-white with no touch of color save the vivid scarlet of her lovely mouth. Her brows and long lashes were dead black. Her heavy hair was of midnight darkness. She had a lithe, slender figure with a subtle suggestiveness, however, of voluptuousness.

She was staring straight before her, so absorbed in thought that she had not noticed Eugene's approach. With a slight start, she turned as he took a few steps toward her, then arose and stood with her arms hanging straight at her sides, looking at him.

Eugene bared his curly blond head.

"I beg your pardon," he said. She looked at him without speaking. "I am Eugene Hungerford," he went on to explain. He paused, looking at her inquiringly.

The shadow of a smile touched the perfect flower beauty of her mouth.

"I am—Lorine," she said, in a low voice of wonderful sweetness. As Eugene stared at her wonderingly, uncomprehendingly, she added, "Mr. Hungerford is my master. I am a slave."

A shock shivered thru Eugene as he realized that the beautiful creature before him had negro blood in her veins, was an octoroon. He was a young man of considerable poise and self-possession, but for the moment he stood silent, nonplused in the presence of the beautiful slave girl. And the glamour of her beauty was on him, the blood raced thru his veins, his pulses throbbed.

Beneath the ardent look in his passionate blue eyes, the color crept into the cream-white of the girl's cheeks, her eyes drooped. She had learned to loathe and to fear admiration and passion in the eyes of men, but Eugene Hungerford, with his splendid physique and fair, boyish face, affected her as no man ever had before. She was thrilled and her breath quickened.

"Why, Eugene!"

Eugene wheeled around. Lorine looked up. A flaxen-haired girl, with the pink-and-white prettiness of a doll, slight and fairylike in figure, had come upon them unawares.

"Dorothy!"

Eugene moved toward her slowly. The girl's pretty pink color had deepened, her blue eyes were alight with joy and with something like tenderness. The slave girl, after one swift glance at her, turned and glided quietly away. Eugene bent and kissed the newcomer on the cheek.

"How are you, Dorothy?" he asked calmly.

Some of the light [illegible] of the girl's eyes. A little wistful questioning crept into them.

"I was so surprised when I saw you," she declared. "We did not expect you today. Did you walk from the station?"

"Yes," Eugene replied, as they turned and walked toward the house. He paused a moment, and then went on with an attempt to speak carelessly. "I stopped to speak to the girl who calls herself Lorine. Do you know," he laughed, not quite naturally, "I took her for a white woman."

"Did you?" said Dorothy, carelessly. "She's pretty, isn't she?"

"Yes," Eugene replied, thinking how inadequate the term was to express the wonderful loveliness of the octoroon. He had seen many fair, patrician women, but none so lovely as the slave girl. He was intensely curious, but did not care to betray the interest he felt in her. It seemed to him that the sunshine had grown brighter, the perfume of the flowers sweeter. It seemed to mount to his brain like wine. He was very young, and he did not attempt to analyze the emotions that possessed him as an older, wiser man might have done. He was conscious that the beauty of the octoroon had appealed to him as the beauty of no woman ever had before, and for some reason the world seemed changed, wonderfully changed.

"Marshall and I are so proud of you, 'Gene," Dorothy was saying, and Eugene roused himself from his dreamy absorption.

"I am glad you and dear old Marshall were pleased," he declared, turning to look down upon the girl's eagerly uplifted face. Had he been less absorbed in thoughts of another woman, he might have read something of the love and tenderness in the girl's blue eyes.

"And now you'll be always at home," she murmured, and her eyes instinctively dropped as tho to hide their telltale joy.

But Eugene Hungerford was blind to it all. When Dorothy Downall had come as his brother's ward to make her home at Hungerford Manor, she was 10 years of age and he 13. They had practically been brought up together, and Eugene loved the girl as he would have loved a sister. It had never occurred to him that Dorothy regarded him in any other light than that of a brother. He would have been greatly surprised and startled had any one hinted such a thing to him.

"Yes, it is good to know that I am home to stay," he exclaimed, with a radiant glance about him. "There's dear old Marshall!" as a heavily built man in riding dress came out of the house onto the veranda.

"'Gene!" he exclaimed, his face lighting.

Eugene sprang up the steps, and the brothers clasped hands.

Marshall Hungerford was a dark, heavy-featured man 40 years of age. He was 17 years of age when Eugene was born and their mother died. Their father died two years later, and Marshall had the entire care of his young brother and of the large plantation. Marshall had adored his mother, a beautiful, patrician woman, and was greatly attached to the fair little child for whom she had given her life. He was more like a father in his love and care for the boy than a brother. He had never married. A hot-blooded, passionate man, his life was not a strictly moral one. One of his slaves, a beautiful quadroon, had been housekeeper at the "big house" for a number of years, then he died. But with the laxity regarding such matters in the South, nothing had been thought of it.

Some attributed the fact that Marshall Hungerford had never married to his devotion to his young brother. Any one seeing his face, as he stood clasping his brother's hand and gazing upon him could not have doubted his love for the boy.

"We didn't expect you until tomorrow, laddie," he said. "Aunt Lola has a feast in preparation, and Dorothy and I were going to meet you at the station in great style, the horses wearing your college colors."

"And I have gone and spoiled it all by walking in on you a day sooner," smilingly exclaimed Eugene. "But I believe I enjoyed walking home on this lovely day more than I would driving."

His thoughts went back to the beauti- [illegible]lave girl he had seen among the orange [illegible] wondering if she were employed in the house.

An old negro woman, in spotless white apron, a red bandanna handkerchief bound about her head, in vivid contrast with her ebony skin, appeared in the doorway.

"Why, ef dat ain't my chile!" she exclaimed, at the sight of Eugene.

He went to meet her.

"You dear old thing!" he cried, putting his arms about her shoulders.

She hugged him, then put him from her and looked at him with tender, admiring eyes.

"Honey, 'clar' to goodness! you gits mo' beautifuller ebery day," she declared. "Don't he now, Miss Dor'thy?" appealing to the girl.

Dorothy laughed and flushed.

"Now, Mammy, you're trying to make 'Gene more conceited than he is already," laughed Marshall.

Mammy tossed her head.

"I reckon he's got ebery reason to be 'ceited ef he's a mind to," she declared.

CHAPTER II.

EUGENE went into the house and to his room with Mammy trotting after him.

"Miss Dorothy reckoned on puttin' some flowers in yo' room, honey," she told him, "'spectin' you warn't comin' till tomorrer. She ain't thought ob nuthin' else fo' a week but yo' comin' home. Dat chile sholy do set a lot ob sto' by you, Marse Eugene."

She glanced at him out of the corner of her eye as she spoke. He had walked to the window and was looking out, and he spoke a little abstractedly.

"She's a dear child. I couldn't be fonder of Dorothy if she were my sister," he said.

"Sister!" exclaimed Mammy. "Why, I thought mabbe you and Miss Dor'thy be gittin' marr'ed one ob dese days."

Eugene laughed.

"You silly old Mammy! Such a thought has never entered our heads."

"Humph!" murmured Mammy to herself. "I ain't so sho' 'bout Miss Dor'thy's hade." Aloud she said, "Miss Dor'thy am a mighty pooty young lady."

"Yes, she's pretty," murmured Eugene, but he was not thinking of Dorothy's pink-and-white doll face, but of the warm, vivid, haunting loveliness of Lorine, the octoroon.

A mulatto girl came into the room with a jug of hot water, courtesied and went out.

"Dorothy was telling me that Marshall had bought an octoroon slave girl," said Eugene, moving away from the window and unbuttoning his jacket.

"Ya'as," said Mammy, as she prepared Eugene's bath. "Dat gal, Lorine. Marse done brung her frum down in Georgy."

"Is she employed about the house?" asked Eugene, tossing his jacket on the bed.

"No, she am down to de quartahs," replied Mammy. "But," chuckling, "dat gal be comin' soon to de big house. She am too pooty to stay at de quartahs. I reckon de massa didn't buy her fo' to leave her down thar."

An odd sort of shock shivered thru Eugene. For a moment a feeling like hatred for his brother throbbed thru his veins. Then he shook it off. Why should it concern him if his brother chose to make the octoroon his mistress? She was his property to do with as he pleased. He had no doubt bought her because of her beauty.

"I'se gwine to tell dat 'Liza you'se done come, honey," said Mammy, going toward the door. "And to hab a suppah to yo' likin'."

"Tell her not to forget the rice waffles," Eugene called after her.

"I done had dem rice waffles in my mind," declared Mammy, as she went out.

Eugene whistled as he went about making his toilet. He replaced his cadet uniform with a fresh, cool suit of white linen, in which he looked very boyish and very handsome.

In the meanwhile, Marshall's horse had been brought around, and he had ridden off in the direction of the slave quarters. He stopped before the door of one of the larger cabins. A mulatto woman, with snow-white hair, carrying herself erect despite the weight of more than eighty years upon her shoulders, came to the door as Marshall rapped sharply upon it with his riding whip.

"Good ebenin', massa," she said, with a courtesy.

"Where's Lorine, Elinore?" asked Marshall.

"I dunno, massa. She went 'way mo'n an hour ago, and ain't come back yit."

Marshall frowned a little impatiently.

"It's about [illegible] didn't buy her for the [illegible] I allowed her to stay here because she expressed a desire to do so, but I should think she had had enough of it by this time."

"I ain't heahed her complain none, massa," declared the mulatto woman, quietly.

Marshall shrugged his shoulders.

"She's spoiled and wants to be coaxed, I reckon," he said. "Her late master and mistress were very fond of her. They educated her and brought her up almost like their own child. Well," a passionate light flashed into his eyes, and he smiled softly, "I am willing to do the coaxing."

He laughed and rode off. Elinore stood looking after him strangely for a moment. Then she saw that Lorine was coming toward the cabin from the opposite direction, walking very slowly, as tho she wished to avoid the master. The old mulatto woman turned back into the cabin and sat down in a chintz-covered rocking chair.

The interior of the cabin was neat and spotlessly clean. There was a white muslin curtain at the window looped back with blue ribbon. A blue pitcher, filled with white and purple lilacs, stood on the wooden table against the wall.

Lorine came slowly into the cabin.

"De massa hab been heah axin' fo' you, honey," said Elinore. The girl shivered. "He's aftah habin' you up to de big house," added the mulatto woman.

Lorine drew forward a stool and sat down beside the old woman's chair. "I don't want to go to the big house," she said.

The mulatto smoothed back with a pitying touch the girl's heavy, satiny hair.

"I reckon it ain't no use, honey, fo' you to be fightin' ag'in' it," she declared thoughtfully. "You know you 'longs to de massa, and I reckon he's boun' to hab his way." Lorine sighed shiveringly. A faraway look had come into the mulatto's eyes. "It war night on to sixty yeahs ago when de ole massa, de fadder ob Marse Marshall, done set his desires on me. I war a mighty good-lookin' yaller gal, wid red in my cheeks and crinkly ha'r 'most down to my waist. And de ole marse, he 'gun to took notice ob me. I wah lak you. I didn't wanter go to de big house, and I uster hide frum de massa when I seed him comin'. It war dis-away. Me and Silas lubed each oder, and we reckoned on gittin marr'ed one ob dese days. Silas, he war tall and straight and strong. He war brown-skinned, and his teeth war white as milk, and dem brack eyes ob his'n war allers a-laffin'. One day Silas went up to de big house and axed de massa ef him and me could git marr'ed. De massa, he laffed and sade, 'Wait a while.'"

She paused. Lorine was looking at her with wide, troubled eyes. After a moment, Elinore continued:

"De massa comed down to de cabin one day and tole me I war to come up to de big house de nex' mo'nin'. Dat night de niggers had a dance down to de quartahs. Silas and me, we j'ined in de singin' and de dancin', but our hearts war bery sad. Silas comed home wid me to de cabin do', and took me in his arms and kissed me bery sor'ful-lak. I jest clung to him, whispern' lak, 'Don't fo'git de massa sade we could git marr'ed arter while'. 'Mabbe you won't want to come back to de quartahs no mo', sade Silas. 'I lubs you, Silas, and I gwine to count de days till I comes back to you,' I done tole him. 'I'd radder die dis minit dan go to de big house.'"

"Did you tell the master that you didn't want to go to the big house?" asked Lorine.

The ghost of a smile flitted across the old woman's wrinkled, parchment-like face.

"'Twouldn't hab been no use, chile. Don't you know dat? He's de massa."

Lorine shrank back. There was a hunted look in her velvety eyes. The old mulatto woman paid no heed to her. The faraway look had come back to her eyes. She spoke as tho to herself.

"When I'd been up to de big house 'bout six months, Silas, he done marr'ed Melissy. She war a brown-skinned gal. I reckon Silas, he done got tired waitin' fo' me to come back to de quartahs. I stayed at the big house till it war 'most time fo' de baby to come, den massa send me back to de quartahs." She turned to Lorine. "I don't know wedder you eber seed Nancy. She went up to de big house to be maid to Miss Dor'thy when she comed. Nancy, she's my gal."

Lorine had [illegible] murmured. "God help me!"

CHAPTER III.

DOROTHY could not make up her mind what gown to wear on the evening of Eugene's return. Finally she said to Nancy, her maid:

"Which one of my dresses do you think is the most becoming, Nancy?"

Nancy considered a moment.

"Dat silk dress what am de color ob yo' cheeks," she replied, at last.

Dorothy laughed happily. But she hesitated.

"Isn't it too much like a party-dress, Nancy?" she objected.

"What ob dat?" exclaimed Nancy. "I reckon you wants to do sompthin' in honor ob Marse Eugene's comin' home."

"Very well," acquiesced Dorothy.

Nancy went to a press and took down the rose-pink silk.

"You wants to look yo' pootiest, don't you, honey?"

The girl blushed and her eyes drooped.

"Yes," she whispered.

She did look very pretty and very like a wax doll when she was arrayed in the rose-pink gown. Her hair fell in flaxen curls on her shoulders, and Nancy had twined in them a spray of pink rosebuds.

"You'se pooty as a picter, honey," declared Nancy, as she stood off regarding her young mistress with great admiration. "I reckon dat's what Marse Eugene gwine to think, too. He jest kyant help it ef he's done got eyes in his hade."

Dorothy ran up to Nancy and hugged her.

"You silly old Nancy!" she exclaimed, with a happy laugh.

She ran out of the room and down the winding stairway, a song on her lips. Marshall Hungerford, half reclining on a couch in the wide hall, straightened up and looked at Dorothy smilingly as she came toward him a little shyly.

"'Airy, fairy Lilian!'" he ex

She sat down on his knee, slip

her slim bare arms about his ne

"Nancy thought I ought to dress up because Eugene has come home," she murmured.

"Wise old Nance!" declared Marshall. He pulled one of Dorothy's flaxlike curls to its full length, as he added, "It's good to have the laddie home, isn' it, Dorothy, girl?"

He glanced at her sharply as he spoke.

"Yes," she murmured, and there was no mistaking the joy and radiance in her eyes.

Marshall looked away from her thoughtfully. The girl's happiness was very dear to him, and for the moment he felt troubled. Did Eugene care as she cared? Then he shook off the troubled feeling. Why shouldn't he care? Dorothy was young and sweet and pretty, and Eugene was very young. It was not likely that he cared for any one else.

"You won't want me for a cavalier now that you have a handsome young chap like 'Gene," he said playfully.

She laid her pink cheek caressingly against his.

"No one can quite fill your place," she declared tenderly. "You've been so good, so good to me."

"I have tried to make you happy, little one," he said, a touch of great earnestness underlying the light tenderness of his voice.

"You have made me happy," she declared.

"It is good to know that," said Marshall.

She jumped up from his knee, and he arose a little wearily.

"I must go dress for supper," he said, and he went slowly up the stairs as tho he were very tired.

Dorothy turned and went out on to the veranda. Eugene was coming up the steps, a spray of orange blossoms in his hand. He smiled up at Dorothy. A thrill of disappointment went thru her. There was no look of admiration lighting Eugene's eyes. She had donned the pretty rose-pink gown in vain since it had failed to make her fairer in his eyes.

"Is there a party tonight somewhere?" he asked.

Dorothy flushed painfully.

"Oh, no," she replied, trying to speak indifferently, but she hated the pink gown, and wanted to run away and exchange it for the simplest one she owned.

That night, after Dorothy had gone to bed, Marshall and Eugene were sitting on the veranda. Down at the quarters [illegible] singing a quaint, sweet melody that floated softly to them thru the perfumed air. The brothers had fallen into silence, listening. As the singing ceased, Eugene asked, with assumed carelessness:

"From whom did you buy the octoroon called Lorine, Marshall?"

"You have seen her?" questioned Marshall.

"Yes, this afternoon on my way to the house. I thought she was a white woman." He laughed rather constrainedly. "But she told me she was a slave and her name was Lorine."

"I bought her some months ago when I was in Georgia," Marshall explained. "She belonged to the Edmund Byrd estate. At his death, the plantation was found to be heavily mortgaged. The slaves were sold. Among them was this octoroon, Lorine. The Byrds had raised her almost like a daughter. It had been Byrd's intention to set her free, I understand, but he died suddenly, and it was found that he had not freed the girl. I happened to attend the sale of the Byrd negroes. There was hot bidding for the girl, Lorine, but I wanted her, and I outbid them all. I paid five thousand dollars for her."

There was a moment's silence. It required an effort on the part of Eugene to speak naturally.

"You had a purpose in buying her?"

Marshall gave a short laugh. "Of course. You have seen the girl. I don't need to tell you how beautiful she is."

Eugene took a moment to steady his voice before asking, "Have you carried out—that purpose?"

"No." Eugene breathed a great sigh of relief. "The girl has been living at the quarters with old Elinore. I have allowed her to stay there, but I am going to bring her to the house soon now."

"And what if she is not—willing?"

"Willing?" Marshall shrugged his shoulders. "The girl is a slave."

Hot, passionate words rose to Eugene's lips, but he realized the more than folly of them, and forced them back. His brother spoke the truth. The girl, with her haunting beauty, her refinement, her dignity, was but a slave, as much the property of her master as his dog or his horse. Eugene Hungerford was a Southerner to the heart's core, but in that moment he felt a loathing for the thing called slavery. He sat silent, staring out into the scented darkness of the summer night. After a moment or so, Marshall spoke.

"What do you think of Dorothy, 'Gene?" he asked. "Hasn't she grown to be a little beauty?"

Eugene roused himself.

"Yes, she's pretty," he replied indifferently. "She reminds me of a wax doll."

Marshall's brows contracted a little.

"She's a dear little girl," Eugene added, with more warmth. "I am very fond of Dorothy. I do not believe I could care more for a sister if I had one."

Marshall stirred a little impatiently. He opened his lips as tho to speak, then closed them again.

CHAPTER IV.

A MONTH had passed. The night was silvery with moonlight, drenched with the perfume of flowers. The face of Lorine was unspeakably lovely. She and Eugene stood among the orange blossoms and the roses. His arms were about her, her eyes, love-lighted, were uplifted to his. Between his kisses he whispered tender and passionate words.

Eugene was too young and too hot-blooded to fight long against the appeal the beauty of the octoroon had made to him. He found that she spent a great deal of time wandering about the grounds. They met at first seemingly by chance, then it became understood that they should meet. And the slave girl, who had loathed and feared men's love, gave her very soul into the keeping of the blue-eyed boy who wooed her. And he, at first aroused and enthralled simply by her beauty, grew to love her very dearly, very tenderly. She was so beautiful, so tender, so impassioned.

They were very, very happy. Eugene had forgotten that she was his brother's slave, that there was negro blood in her veins. His love uplifted her.

"I cannot stay very long with you tonight, dearest," he told her, after a little while. "My brother is coming home this evening." He felt her shiver and smiled as he reassured her, saying: "You have nothing to fear from him. I shall tell him that we love each other. That will make everything all right. Marshall has never refused me anything in all my life."

A great sigh of relief left her lips.

"It was dreadful before I learned to love you," she murmured. "But now I am sure that I would prefer death."

"I believe I would rather know that you were dead than have you belong to another," he exclaimed passionately.

They parted after a little while reluctantly. As he went in the direction of the house, Eugene made up his mind not to delay speaking to his brother about Lorine.

"I shall ask him to give her to me," he said to himself.

Dorothy was standing on the veranda when Eugene reached the house.

"Has Marshall come, Dorothy?" he asked.

She replied in the affirmative, and Eugene passed into the house. She gazed after him with a plaintive look in her blue eyes.

Eugene found his brother lying upon a couch in the library. His face had a worn look, but his eyes lighted at the sight of Eugene. They shook hands.

"Why, how tired you look, Marshall!" exclaimed Eugene.

Marshall sank back heavily.

"I am tired," he said. "Sit down beside me, laddie. I want to talk with you."

Eugene glanced at his brother a little questioningly as he sat down. Marshall seemed unusually grave.

"I did not tell you what my object was in going to the city," he said. "I went to consult a physician."

The dreamy absorption in which Eugene's senses had been wrapped dropped from him. He became suddenly alert.

"There is nothing wrong with you, is there, Marshall?" he exclaimed.

"I have known for sometime that my heart was not all right," said Marshall. "I went to a physician who makes a specialty of heart disease. He told me that I have organic disease of the heart."

A distressed expression broke from Eugene's lips.

"You mustn't worry about it, laddie." Marshall laid an affectionate hand on his brother's arm. "The doctor said I might live to be an old man." He hesitated a moment. "And that the end might come at any time."

"Marshall!" Eugene's boyish face was pale, his voice broken as he stretched out his hand to his brother.

There was a moment of silence, then Marshall said:

"Eugene, I want you to marry Dorothy."

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

The Unseen

By Edward Cahn

TRAVERS threw down his pen and watched it roll across the scattered sheets of paper littering his desk, leaving an inky trail behind it, then leaned his head on his hands and gave himself up to his mood. Presently he reread the brief communication from his publishers and thought, "Why in thunder can't I write that yarn? Never felt so devoid of ideas or such a loathing for work before. Well, I've got to grind it out between now and tomorrow noon. It simply will not do for me to fail now, just as I am gaining recognition. Was ever any man in such a hole?"

He listened to the dull roar of the city which emphasized the peaceful silence of his room, punctuated by the measured tick-tick of his mantel clock. It seemed oppressive.

He rose and snapped out the electric lights, leaving only a small, heavily-shaded lamp burning on his desk. Throwing up a window, he filled his lungs with the icy air of the chill December night. "Ah!" he said aloud. "That ought to clear the cobwebs out of my brain."

The stars shone brightly, and the moon cast its benign countenance on the glare of countless electrics illuminating busy, reckless Broadway, all the brighter for its frozen cap of snow.

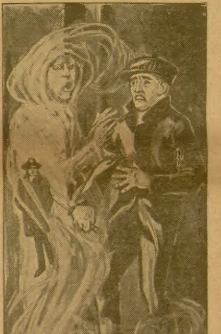
Closing the window, he stood gazing out upon that main artery of the world, his heavy head against the pane.

"Life," he murmured, "wonderful, pulsing, blood-red life, varied, awful, mysterious. There it is before me, and still I cannot grasp one tiny phase of it, red enough, live enough, for my purpose.

"Pshaw!" he exclaimed, and flung himself into an armchair. "Inspiration is not there this time. There is no use winking at the truth any longer. Ever since poor Mathews went, I have not been myself. Strange, too—for he was nothing to me. In fact he thought I was his deadly enemy! He even said he would like to kill me—I wonder why? I have felt queer, half-mad—haunted—ever since he went.

"What an utter idiot I was to go to that cursed seance of Professor Ivan's and listen to all their gabble about spiritualism and the unseen. And what on earth ever prompted me to let them put me into that awful state, developing my mediumistic powers, they said, is more than I know.

"God! I was on the verge of something—a discovery—I'd take my oath that—No! It's all rot, pure hysteria, nonsense—and yet—I am not so sure that it is, after all. There may be something in it. I will swear there has been some personality influencing me ever since. I felt it coming then, and then, thank God! good old Arthur refused to let them go on.



"Would you murder?"

"I would do anything on earth to get it out of my mind—be rid of it. Whatever it is I want to face it, know it, and get peace at any price."

Travers sighed, utterly weary, and closed his eyes, work forgotten, his whole mind striving to bring order out of this chaos of dim impression and vague conjecture. Gradually he became tranquil; he no longer felt any apprehension, and wondered at his former mood as we are wont to wonder at a disturbing dream.

The steam pipes clanked in an adjoining room. He heard the newsboys crying their late papers; the gongs of street cars, the low rumble of the "L," and the faint honk-honk of motor cars rising above the hum of the city.

The clock ticked noisily on; Travers wondered what time it was and opened his eyes. In the shadows stood a man! He sat up with a start.

"How did you get here?" Travers demanded.

The stranger took a step forward, hesitatingly, making a slight deprecatory movement with his hand, but remained silent. His footfall was noiseless, and Travers felt a prickling of his flesh as he watched his visitor. The intruder stopped and gazed into Travers' face with almost painful intensity; then, very slowly, he drew closer to the circle of light cast by the lamp.

Travers' heart gave a great leap, for now he saw that his mute guest was a phantom!

"Where—where—are you from?" he gasped.

"Beyond," answered the apparition, in a low voice.

Travers grew rigid as the full significance of that one word burst upon him, and great beads of cold perspiration stood out upon his pale forehead.

Observing this, a look of something like fear crossed the visage of the other, and for an instant he became nearly invisible; then, swaying slightly, he drew closer. Step by step he glided nearer and nearer, then stopped abruptly, bent his head, and gazed into Travers' ghastly face.

"Don't you know me?"

"God!" whispered Travers, hoarsely, "it's Mathews! Mathews who died last week—come back!"

A look of infinite relief swept over the phantom's face. "Yes. I'm Mathews. I was afraid you would not know me." He passed his hand over his eyes as if weary. "I have been trying to reach you ever since soon after I passed out, Travers, and my time now is short—terribly short. I want your body. I must have it tonight—now! Do you consent?" he demanded suddenly.

"My body! What do you mean?"

"This," said Mathews. "I want you to change places with me. Let my spirit, my ghost, if you like, enter your body, and let me do what I must do, in it. Mine is gone forever. No one in the universe can help me but you. Will you? Oh, Travers, I cannot explain, but do not be afraid to do it. Don't refuse and damn me forever."

There was such a tragic world of anguish in his eyes that Travers shuddered at the sight of a soul in torment. His dread and horror lost themselves in a flood of compassion.

"I will, I'll do anything you ask, Mathews," he answered fervently.

"Freely?"

"Freely and gladly," answered Travers, solemnly.

A wonderful look of thanks and gratitude illuminated Mathews' face, and he smiled. A sharp tremor ran thru Travers' body, followed by a violent shock, and he felt himself growing light. It was dark for an instant; his senses reeled, and then he was himself again.

Before him, stood a living, breathing man—himself! But no, not quite himself, for the face, or rather the expression, was not his, but Mathews'. It was Mathews—Mathews in the flesh—Travers' flesh—but the soul in the eyes was not his soul, but that of Mathews!

"How do you feel? Here, look at your new self." He strode to the long mirror in the wardrobe. Travers followed and beheld a shadowy, transparent shape, swaying uncertainly like a puff of thin blue smoke lightly tossed by a lazy breeze which threatens to dispel it every instant.

"Now you see your own ghost. Pray that you never stand face to face with your own soul!" Mathews sighed sadly and turned away.

"Ah, Travers, it seems good to be in a body once more, such a good substantial one, too!" He stretched his newfound arms.

"But time flies; I must be off," he exclaimed, and seized Travers' hat and overcoat. "Be sure that you are here when I return if you want your body back. I will be here at midnight. Remember."

"Can I leave here?"

"You can go anywhere you like, unseen, unheard," answered Mathews, putting on the coat.

Travers found it uncanny to be watching his domination of his own earthly body, and found himself admiring his easy long strides and the broad shoulders and well-poised head as if they were indeed not his own.

"Well, what art thou thinking, thou shade?" asked Mathews, stuffing a handkerchief into his pocket and helping himself to a cigar.

"Nothing, nothing," answered Travers, hastily. "Only, I say, old chap, take good care of my house of clay, won't you? I find that I'm fond of it, now that I am quit of it."

"Never fear, my friend; you know I am dead. That is, from your point of view I am."

"Then there is no real death?"

Mathews struck a match and watched it burn a moment in silence, then lit his cigar.

"No," he said at last. "No, it is all life. But perhaps you will see for yourself between now and midnight. Be sure to be here by then, you ghastly Cinderella." He laughed, the old sardonic chuckle of the departed Mathews, man of fierce fires, fierce anger, and fierce loves.

At the door he paused. "Say, Travers, I must have a latchkey. I can't get thru the keyhole now."

"It's in the pocket."

"So it is," said Mathews, drawing it out. "Midnight, remember."

"Midnight," repeated Travers.

Mathews went out, closing the door after him with a vigorous snap.

"Just as he always closed a door," mused Travers. "He laughed with my vocal cords, and still it was not my laugh, not my voice. His personality in my body. Queer! Personality must be of the spirit, too."

He peered into the mirror, studying his vague outlines with interest. "Yes, that's me all right. I'm very dim and foggy, not nearly so distinct as Mathews' ghost. He was quite plain compared to me. Maybe, being so new a wraith, I am still weak."

He put forth a vaporous hand to touch

the glass, but felt nothing. There was no imprint, no shadow. He glided to his desk and strove to lift a sheet of paper, but found himself powerless. Still, he could hear every sound from the outside world with keener hearing, and his sight seemed sharpened.

"Be sure' to be here by midnight," Mathews' words recalled themselves. "That means I can go where I like until then. I will!"

And, smiling to himself at this strangest of strange adventures, he glided to the door with much the same movement he had used to turn his head in the flesh. He found the door no barrier, and slipped thru the stout wood as if it were not there.

At the foot of the stairs he paused and listened, amused by the chorus of snores from the German family's rooms. Somewhere above a board creaked. A key grated in the door and it swung open.

Travers crouched against the wall. "What if I should be seen?" he thought in alarm. It was the young lady of the room above his. She stepped inside and looked straight thru him up the stairs. "I hope she won't be frightened!" he thought.

"Nobody about," she said in a whisper, and her lover entered for a farewell kiss.

"They can't see me," thought Travers, gliding past them and out into the night. He chuckled to himself. "To see and hear and think and have a sense of humor and still be dead, disembodied, a ghost! Verily, in the midst of life is death! But suppose Mathews never comes back—what then?"

A shade of fear crossed his brain, but he dismissed it as he sped along under the street lamps, light as air. A little gust of wind blew him off his feet, and he discovered that he could move along in the air without any conscious effort, incredibly fast.

He became aware of other shadowy shapes around him, phantoms, too. They were everywhere, above, beside, and mingling with the living creatures rushing hither and thither in the feverish haste of modern life. Travers tried to speak to them, but none answered nor appeared to see him. "After all," he thought, "I am not like them."

He turned into brilliant theaters, gay restaurants, hotels, the opera, sat beside a beautiful singer in her carriage, paused to listen to a group of his earthly friends speak of him in a gilded bar, and saw a boy with an evil face, flushed with wine, leave his companions, and with a face dark with evil, slink away unnoticed.

"There is trouble there," thought Travers, watching him go.

He turned his attention again to his friends, but something drew him, unwillingly, after the evil-faced boy, who soon turned into another bar and ordered a stiff drink.

"He has had too much now," thought Travers, laying an unseen hand over the glass. "No, no, no!" he said into the boy's ear, voiceless, but vehement. The other shivered, glanced around, and put forth a shaking hand for the liquor. "No," said Travers, "nothing doing."

The boy hesitated, wavered, and flung down a coin with an oath. "I can't drink it," he said savagely to the bartender, and flung himself out, Travers following.

He followed the boy up one glaring street and down another, impelled by he knew not what, nor whence came the sickening premonition of impending evil which possessed him.

At last, casting a furtive look over his shoulder, the boy stepped into a dark doorway in a dim by-street. Travers saw him unsheathe a knife, saw the hideous look of hate and blood-lust masking his face, and heard him mutter, "I'll kill him now as he passes!"

"Would you murder? It is murder, murder, murder!" said Travers over and over.

The boy shifted uneasily, fingering his knife, and muttered an oath. "Am I afraid?" he sneeringly asked himself, and suddenly grew tense, his eyes blazing and breath coming in short gasps. "There he comes! There he comes!" He was crouching for a spring.

"It is Mathews!" moaned Travers. "Mathews in my body! Oh! It's a mistake!" he shrieked in a frenzy, inaudible to the human ears of the assassin. "Boy! Boy! That is my body, mine—Travers'!"

But the boy did not hear, his face working with impatience for the fatal instant coming nearer and nearer as Mathews swung along with his fine free stride.

Travers flung himself before the oncoming Mathews. "Stop! Murder!"

Mathews stopped. "It is nearly midnight," he whispered. "Go!" A gurgling cry sounded behind him, as the assassin, with eyes glazed with horror at the ghost he had seen too late, fell forward on his face and rolled into the gutter.

Travers turned, and rising into the air, sped on the wings of the chill night wind to his lodgings. He entered at the window, and sank into the chair at his desk. "What does it all mean?" he wondered vaguely, and fell into a doze. He roused as the door opened and Mathews entered.

"Ah, Travers, just in time." He removed his coat and hat and tossed the latchkey onto the table.

"What does it all mean?" demanded Travers, unsteadily. "You saw that murderer, didn't you?"

"Yes, I laid a trap for you, Travers. I had hired that assassin the night I was killed by accident. I—I hated you. The boy still waited for you—still plotted your death. It was all arranged the night I died, but my heart failed me at the last moment, and I was on my way to warn you when I was killed.

"But the evil I did lived after me in the brain of my poor tool. My repentance had earned me the right to save you if you would help. The foolish boy, liberated by his fright at sight of you, has passed on, also. I only hoped to give you warning, but it is in other hands than mine." He gave a great sigh, shuddered, his face grew old and dim, and Travers stood again in the flesh staring at the wraith.

"Oh, Mathews!" he said chokingly. His tone and face expressed understanding, forgiveness, and compassion.

The phantom faded swiftly with a look of peace which spoke of Heaven. "Good-by, Travers; now you have your story. Good-by."

"Good-by," said Travers with tear-dimmed eyes. "God bless you." Weariness overwhelmed him, and he pillowed his head on his arms.

The next morning he was awakened by the entrance of the housemaid.

"Oh, la! Mr. Travers," she exclaimed. "Didn't you hear me knock? Been asleep at your desk all night? And the lamp burning yet! Lan' sakes alive! Did you write all night long?"

Travers followed her gaze to the heap of manuscript before him, staring at it uncomprehendingly. "I—I don't know, Lizzie," he said in a dazed way.

"Well, I declare," she giggled. "Ain't it in your handwritin'?"

It was, and after he had read it he declared to himself that it was the best thing he had ever written. "I must be a somnambulist, and all that about Mathews just a dream," he thought.

"Here's the paper," said Lizzie. "There's a queer thing happened on Seventeenth street. Man found dead in the gutter with a knife in his hand, an' no marks of how he came to die, 'cept the terrible look on his face. The doctor says he must have died of fright. There's his picture on the other page."

Travers turned to it hastily. "The boy! That's the boy!"

"Oh, lan'! Mr. Travers!" screamed Lizzie. "Help! Help! Mr. Travers has fainted!"

* * *

Trust Him Not

She was a sweet young bride who had already found that what looks like a nice piece of meat in the shop often seems to have gone thru a private transformation scene when it arrives home.

"How is it," she inquired eagerly, when a married friend called upon her, "that you always manage to have such delicious beef?"

"It's very simple," replied the elder woman. "I first select a good, honest butcher, and then I stand by him."

"Oh, I see; you mean that you give him all your trade?" said the innocent young bride.

"No!" answered her companion, grimly. "I stand by him while he is cutting the meat!"

* * *

His by Right.

An Irish chauffeur in San Francisco, who had been having trouble with numerous small boys in the neighborhood of his stand, discovered one day on examining his car that there was a dead cat on one of the seats. In his anger he was about to throw the carcass into the street, when he espied a policeman.

Holding up the carcass, he exclaimed:

"This is how I am insulted. What am I to do with it?"

"Well, don't you know? Take it straight to headquarters, and if it is not claimed within a month it becomes your property."

PHYLLIS: DISCIPLINARIAN.

Phyllis hath the strangest way,
When from rectitude I stray
Into some bypath of sin,
Of bestowing discipline

Not a syllable of blame!
Not a scorching glance of flame!
Not a word, and not a look,
Comes to summon me to book—

But, alas—ah, how it burns!—
Straight to otherward she turns,
And for all that I can see
Never seems aware of me.

It is quite as tho I were
In a sphere apart from her:
In some planet void of mirth
Countless leagues away from earth.

Or as if, if there at all,
I were such an atom small
That nobody'd be aware
Of the fact that I was there.

Then, when I grow penitent
'Neath this lashing punishment,
Her forgiveness is so sweet
That my lapse I oft repeat.

'Tis so blissful being shriven
That I sin to be forgiven!

* * *

THE WAYS OF A MAN.

"Yes, we're going to move this fall, and don't give a rap what any one says!" With which stern declaration Jenkins jerked open the door and then slammed it after him.

Mrs. Jenkins hadn't regained her breath when the door suddenly opened, and Jenkins stepped back into the hall.

"Here we are," he sputtered, "with no steam, on a freezing morning like this! Blamed impudent janitor tells me that we'll get it when he gets ready! No hot water! Plumbing all out of gear! Paper fairly hanging from the walls, from the damp that got in two weeks ago! The whole house is an ancient death trap, and I want my family out of it at the earliest possible date! Do you understand me clearly?

"Very likely you will make excuses. You want to shop or sew or go to the matinee—but this time my word is law! We're going to move! Why, look at these floors. If we had a human being for a landlord we'd have had these floors all scraped and revarnished last spring. We're too easy, I tell you! We take everything they hand us, and we get the worst of it. We're gold-bricked by every one! But the end has come. Hereafter, I get my full rights, or know the reason for not getting them!

"Have I made myself perfectly clear! Do you understand that you must hunt for an apartment where we may live as civilized persons have a right to live? The sooner we leave this cave the better I shall be pleased!"

Having thus delivered his ultimatum, Jenkins again closed the door behind him with a loud slam.

Mrs. Jenkins sighed wearily as she prepared to hunt a flat that she could make her new home.

She returned at nightfall, worn and sick at heart, with nothing to show for the day. Nothing was any better than the much despised abode that she now called home. Everywhere were the faults condemned by her husband.

She shrank from meeting Jenkins at tea. She dreaded his remarks on her lack of capability, the sarcasm that she felt would follow his morning's anger.

She was much surprised therefore to find her husband seated cozily in the library, before a crackling grate fire, smiling, genial, evidently without a care.

"Why, where have you been?" he asked, as she flung herself down in a chair, too tired to sit straight.

"I simply couldn't find one!" she exclaimed, tragically.

"Simply couldn't find what?" he demanded in surprise.

"An apartment. You know——" She stopped from sheer fatigue.

"Why, my dear child, what on earth do you want an apartment for? What's the matter with this?" He was gently indulgent with her. "This suits me. Where could you find a grate like this?"

"That's just it—I couldn't!"

"Then what's the use of trying?"

"But the steam!"

"You must learn to curb your impatience, my dear," he said in a gently reproving tone. "We are entitled to steam only from November 1."

"But then, the hot water!"

"Does such a trifle as hot water upset you?" He was grieved.

"Why, I thought"—Mrs. Jenkins was puzzled, yet she feared to rouse the temper displayed in the morning—"I thought the plumbing—and the wallpaper—and the dampness—and the floors—why, you said the house was a death trap, and the sooner we moved the better!"

"Now, my dear," said Jenkins, "perhaps I was a trifle vexed this morning, I don't remember over what, but I may have said something hastily that I didn't mean. What of it? Is that any reason for you to lose your temper? Should that make you dissatisfied with your home? I'm surprised at you! I thought you were different from the general herd of women, who dote on moving as often as possible. I——"

But Mrs. Jenkins heard nothing more. Her faculties were frantically trying to straighten out the chaos of her brain.

* * *

Prize Winners.

"I declare!" said Jameson. "There is a dog at the dog show that I must have! He is the cutest thing! And only one hundred dollars."

"That's cheap for a dog," answered Trimby. "But I wouldn't buy a prize dog if I were you. When a dog is unfit for anything else they put him in a dog show in hopes of selling him.

"My friend Bowler had a hound who was always getting lost. Bowler would go hunting and that dog would get away in some ravine and give the lost call until Bowler wanted to kill him, he would feel so sorry for him. Bowler would blow his lungs out, and the hound would never answer the horn. As a final resort Bowler entered him in a prize show. He got first prize and sold the beast for sixty dollars.

"I had an aunt who was a prize show devotee. Chickens were her specialty. She used to keep White Leghorns and the night before they were to be taken to the show she would bring them into the house and wash them, as the glossiness of their fathers was the main thing. She would take soft soap and water and wash them and then rinse them in bluing water and butter their feet so as to make them shiny and yellow, and then she would put them in white-lined boxes to keep clean. If they leaned up against the box and their tails dried crooked, or if their shape wasn't exactly symmetrical they had to be done over again. Sometimes Aunt Malinda would keep them in the kitchen all night, perched up on white cotton roosts.

"She cured her husband of the drink habit that way. He came in one night and saw the kitchen all white with white birds sitting all around, and he thought sure he had 'em. If he had known it was chickens he would have been sore, because he hated chickens, and didn't enter into the prize-winning spirit at all. He wouldn't help with the launderings and he threw Aunt Malinda down every time he got a chance.

"Once she sent him to buy some fancy eggs for hatching from a man named Gilfosen. Uncle asked for and paid for and got just plain, ordinary eggs at the grocery, and when plain, ordinary chickens were the result he talked loudly about what a crook Gilfosen was to sell plain eggs at fancy prices. When Aunty interviewed Gilfosen she learned the truth about uncle's perfidy.

"But it all turned out very lucky. Aunty was an ingenious woman and she used the curling iron on those plain birds and washed them and starched them and won the first prize with them, the first prize in that instance being a handsome pewter cup, a much better prize than the poultry journal she usually won, a year's subscription to which was twenty-five cents."

* * *

Frightened Her.

In a certain village in South Kilkenny there is a house the door of which must be raised a little to be opened, and for this purpose the hatchet is generally used. One night a knock was heard at the door, and a boy was sent to know who was there.

"Who's there?" asked the youngster.

"It's me," answered the person outside.

The youngster, knowing the voice, shouted back in such a tone that the person outside could hear him:

"Oh, mother, it's Mrs. Murphy; get the hatchet." Needless to say, Mrs. Murphy didn't wait.

* * *

Nerve.

Mr. Wilkins was near the exploding point when his neighbor met him on the street.

"That man Tompkins," he burst out, "has more nerve than any one I ever met!"

"Why?" asked his neighbor, dubiously.

"He came over to my house last evening and borrowed my gun to kill a dog that kept him awake at night."

"Well, what of that?"

"Why," shouted Mr. Wilkins, "it was my dog he killed!"

Scorched Girl-Moths

:-: Or, :-:

Charmed by the Prince of Hearts

By B. S. Saunier

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CHAPTER VII.

THERE was gold on the water, and gold on the forest; there was gold in the air, and gold on the faces of the two who came down the path leading to the tethered boats that stirred in the dimpling water.

Anabelle's high spirits of the early afternoon had been checked by the bold assurances of her lover "Jack." That he was her captive made her satisfaction perfect; but the surety of it made her own self-control easy. His ardor drove her own emotions back, and brought out a certain reserve that belonged wholly to a more mature womanhood. So she resolved to hold him back in case he forgot himself and "went too far" in his boyish, impulsive love-making.

There were no others enjoying the golden warmth of the dying sun. As far as spectators were concerned they had the little lake all to themselves. They selected a boat, untied the tether, and embarked with the yellow light glorifying their faces. "Jack" took up the oars and explained how they used to row in teams at college. Then he sang a number of songs that amused her immensely. By that time they were in the shadows of the bank with the lowering rays of gold just touching the treetops of the opposite shore, and the day was nearly done.

When the stars were pricking the blue over their heads and a fairy moon was showing in the western horizon, "Jack" seemed to think that he had earned a reward.

"All the stars are telling a story like mine," he remarked, folding his arms and letting his oars trail from the oarlocks. "All the stars are telling what I'm telling thee—the olden-golden story on a golden sea."

"It's faded now—the gold has," Anabelle murmured.

He leaned toward her. "It will never fade from my memory, Anabelle," he assured her softly. "Never! I—I wish you'd tell me something. I want you to tell me that you like me."

Anabelle's dark eyes, with a bit of dancing light in each, fell upon her folded hands in her lap. Something was choking, suffocating her, and her heart was pounding in her pink ears—ears that took no note of a robin in a nearby tree calling sleepily to his mate, or the whip-poor-will's shriller cry deeper in the wood.

"I want you to say I'm the only one for you—never another except Jack Weldon. You can say it, can't you, little girl?"

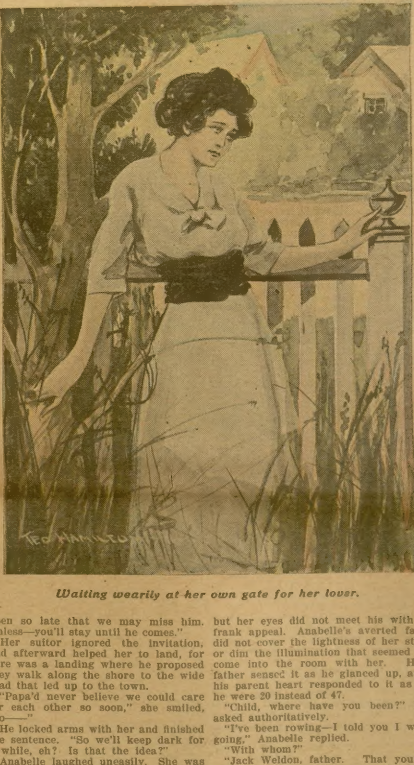
"How can I?" she pouted, determined to hold him off, "when I've seen you so little time. I must think, Jack. I can't tell you yet—some other time, maybe, I will."

"Jack" heaved a sigh and took up the oars. "I can't bear to wait," he declared. "I've never had to wait for what I wanted. Here I fell in love the first time I saw you. I knew you were for me when I first clapped eyes on your face, Anabelle. I'll never forget that day. And I want you to feel the same way toward me."

"I liked you—the best of any one," she said very softly, "but——" she paused and glanced up with a twisty smile, "of course I want father to like you. He must, you know—like you as well as I."

In the shadow of his Panama her lover grinned. Here was a maiden. How he adored this sort—the simple kind, that fell so easily before the blandishments of love. It was what glorified life for him and made it worth while.

"I hope papa'll be home," Anabelle went on, with quiet rapture in her voice and manner, "but he keeps the store open so late that we may miss him. Unless—you'll stay until he comes."



Waiting wearily at her own gate for her lover.

Her suitor ignored the invitation, and afterward helped her to land, for here was a landing where he proposed they walk along the shore to the wide road that led up to the town.

"Papa'd never believe we could care for each other so soon," she smiled, "so——"

He locked arms with her and finished the sentence. "So we'll keep dark for a while, eh? Is that the idea?"

Anabelle laughed uneasily. She was in a whirl of bewildered doubt and delight, and the cry of the whip-poor-will was like a warning that, however, she could never understand, try as she would.

"Father'll not believe in this—this—love-at-first-sight business," she giggled in a nervous trepidation.

"He won't? I'll make him believe it," said "Jack," and put his arm around her. "The first time I get a chance at him I'll make him believe it. And tomorrow night we'll go riding on the golden sea again, and in the afternoon I'm coming up to the house and help you do the housework. In the morning I'll have to write some letters to my mother and friends, or I'd come sooner."

They walked up the inclined path together, Anabelle seeming to need the close pressure of her suitor's arm as a support.

Arriving at the gate, her lover excused himself hastily on seeing a whiskered profile before the lamp on the living-room table.

He stopped and pleaded for a kiss, but this being shyly refused him, he went away; and Anabelle loitered toward the house, ashamed of her burning cheeks, and fearing they would tell tales.

Her father looked up as she entered, but her eyes did not meet his with a frank appeal. Anabelle's averted face did not cover the lightness of her step or dim the illumination that seemed to come into the room with her. Her father sensed it as he glanced up, and his parent heart responded to it as if he were 20 instead of 47.

"Child, where have you been?" he asked authoritatively.

"I've been rowing—I told you I was going," Anabelle replied.

"With whom?"

"Jack Weldon, father. That young man who came to the store with the camping party. They bought their provisions of you."

Mr. Whitcome remembered it with a relish. It had been a big order. But still—had the order included child as well as chattels?

"How'd you get acquainted?" he asked.

"Why, in the store, father. I was there at the time. He—he bought some ribbon of me, and we talked—well, about college and things—and I liked him. You'll like him, too, father, when you meet him. He's from Boston—his folks are rich, too, I guess, by the way he uses his money. That gold-piece——"

"Oh, that gold-piece," broke in her father alertly. "Where is it, anyway? Have you spent it?"

"Indeed, no—you never gave it to me to spend. It's put away in your bureau drawer in mother's old jewelry box."

"How'd you know this fellow comes from Boston?"

"Because he said so."

"Oh!"

The grave questioning was now at an end. The man whose heart's blood was in the balance subsided, his momentary disquiet calmed by the assurances that had been so readily given. This young man whom Anabelle liked was from Boston because he said so. With his years of indulgent affection for his motherless child, the parent was inclined to indulge her in the momentous affairs of her life—to give her what her heart desired, and to discredit, if need be, his own mature wisdom, to rest the matter in the child-mind's judgment. He let her go with a warning as futile and as inane as indulgent parents are ever want to give.

"Well, be careful, child. Tell him to call around some day, and I'll take a look at him," he said.

"Oh, he'll be in the store often, father—he's stopping at Old Fischer's hotel," was Anabelle's cordial reply, and she left him to make her tardy appearance in the kitchen. And, late as it was, her father heard her singing even later as she washed dishes and "spruced up" the room before going to her chamber.

Anabelle's sleep was feverish. It came to her in fits with long wakeful spaces between. And the next forenoon was a fidgety one spent chiefly in going from one window to another so as to get different views of the highways. There was a river road beyond her father's place at the rear that was frequently used by people who came from the farmlands and woods that skirted the river. So Anabelle watched the river road as well as the highway for a sign of a figure in white with a Panama hat and a pink silk shirt. But noon came with no sign of him.

When her father came in to the noon meal she watched him narrowly to see if there was a sign of his meeting "Jack." Of course "Jack" would seek to make friends with the father of the girl whom he was going to marry. So Anabelle reasoned. But evidently her father's thoughts were not her thoughts. He was thinking of that old bill some one up in the woods beyond the river had owed him for a year. It ought to be paid with harvest products. That was all that the graying face and tired eyes told her—nothing exciting, nothing startling.

Anabelle pouted. She arranged the fried sausage and pickles and the potatoes and bread near his plate, and sat down to pour the coffee.

"Anything happen at the store today?" she asked pointedly.

"Nothing much—same as ever," was the tepid reply.

Strangely enough the answer quieted Anabelle. Perhaps her father's indifference was assumed, but whether it were or not his reply made her relax. The tension of the night and of the morning suddenly gave way, and her nerves grew normally calm while she considered her case. Did her father suppose that it was no wonderful thing for her to marry a stunning boy like "Jack" and go away to live in a big city like Boston? There would be great changes—naturally. There would be a glitter of new things and an auto, too. Anabelle's thoughts flew from one fancy to another as she ate the commonplace homemade sausage and tried to eat her own sodden biscuits—biscuits leavened, as was everything now, with love.

When she was alone she flew about and brought order to the rooms by means of "short cut" movements. She hid the pots and frying pans under a shelf, and piled the dishes in the sink, covering them with a cloth, threw the sodden biscuits into the garbage pail, and hustled the rest of the food out of sight. Then she hurried upstairs to dress. And after bathing, while combing her hair and curling it and getting into a white lawn that she selected, she watched from her two windows facing the street and from the unfinished chamber window on the north to see that her lover did not steal a march on her and arrive before she was ready.

She was on the stair on her way down to the cool veranda when "Jack" tapped on the screen.

"Ah," he smiled genially, "you are at home. I was in a fright thinking you might have gone out, and I wanted to sit here in this shady hammock, away from that tropical sun."

Anabelle smiled at his conventions

and radiated her pleasure in them.

"I'm glad you came," she managed to say quietly. "You must make yourself comfortable. I'll get you a fan and a book—supposing we have a book you might care for."

Her visitor laid aside his hat and sat down in the hammock.

"There is just one book I like to read," he said, "and I guess you know what it is. Its title is 'Anabelle.' "

This was silly, but it gave joy to each. "Oh, that isn't printed, yet," she smiled archly.

"It's a picture book—photos—that I carry here." He laid a hand on his silk-covered young chest, and Anabelle blushed prettily.

She brought a book and he coaxed her to sit beside him in the hammock while they looked it over together. The house inside was very silent. The street outside was also silent, except for the distant sound of the harvesters and the nearer music of insects and birds. A cicada sawed lustily in one of the locust trees across the street in the big front yard that belonged to the nearest neighbor.

"I hunted up our mayor this morning—Van Horne, you know, and I asked him how much my fine was. He said it ought to be two hundred dollars, but seeing I meant honest he'd try and get me off with twenty. I handed him the double X and told him to go to it. I'll bet he keeps it—what? He'd be more likely to keep it than send it to the Federal authorities—yes—no?" he questioned laughingly.

"I don't know," Anabelle replied, "but I think it's nice of you to pay it without being made to."

"Oh, I'm an honest guy, I am," her lover answered. "I'm going to be rewarded, all right. I'm going to steal the belle of the town and run off with her. That's worth more than twenty dollars." Which threat was highly amusing and very probable to both man and maid.

So it went for a week. And before the week was over the two had quite brushed away the danger line, had, in fact, merged over it into the intimacies that honorable lovers are wont to shun, but Anabelle's delirium and her lover's reckless disregard for every right except his own amusement and pleasure were a combination at which wiser heads might well stand appalled.

It was unbelievable that Anabelle's father, of staid and respectable habits, was never able to appraise the young man whom his daughter was choosing. But he was blindly indulgent, and besides, he had a business man's vision of returns for the money that he had spent for Anabelle's education. He had fitted her for the life that she was to have in Boston. It was a prideful thing to Mr. Whitcome, and he felt gratified in having done it. The one thing that he neglected to do was to write to Boston and verify the young man's statements about his family. But this point was taken up by a more disinterested party, who was none less than the fussy little mayor of the town, whose love of gossip and inquisitive mind made him eager to spend a trifle of the fine that he had received in postage stamps for a couple of letters that were never answered. They came back to him in due time from the Dead Letter office at Washington.

One day when Anabelle had missed seeing "Jack" for a day or so, she saw him strolling with Harvey, who came and went at his pleasure from the camp in the woods to the little town where his friend "the lady killer" was holding forth. They passed the place on the river road. Anabelle hurried to the back porch and waved a towel, and "Jack," glancing about, saw her and waved his hand in reply. They strolled away then to the music of the reapers in the grainfields and disappeared.

By this time Reginald had become a familiar figure in the little gossipy town. As "Jack Weldon" he was known as a young man who could wear several changes of coats and hats, and always appear well tailored and handsome in contrast to the young farmers of the vicinity.

On this day he wore a light gray suit and a black Fedora. He had a light cane in his hand and a cigarette in his mouth, and he and Harvey were soberly discussing a more serious matter—to them—than sweethearts. They were facing the work problem. For they knew as their vacation time dwindled their nearness to the labor question grew apace. And there was no evading the issue, as their fathers had intimated before they came away from New York.

Discussing this with profane touches of humor, they wandered into the Lawrence wheatfield and, finding a lane that led thru a meadow and past two or three last year's weatherworn haystacks, they followed the lane and approached the barnyard. There were two gates here, one used to close in the cows at night, and the other a set of bars used to drive thru into the yard surrounding the house. They approached the bars. But they paused on seeing that a young girl was standing on the other side among a colony of hencoops, and was smiling over her pleasant task of feeding the fluttering chickens at her feet. Harvey nudged his friend, who halted abruptly at the vision.

"What—another peacherino!" he murmured. "Upon my word!" He gave one admiring moment to Violet's beauty. "She beats the other like dollars do doughnuts," he vowed.

Violet discovered them with a start that was imperceptible. Her blue eyes widened in surprise, however, and both hats came off in apology.

"Beg pardon," purred the two. "We didn't mean to frighten you. And please forgive us for trespassing."

Violet blushed vividly and said it was all right. Harvey studied the bars a moment, and then slipped two of them back. His friend passed thru and paused to watch the chickens, wondering how he could prolong the scene. Then he had a happy thought.

"Er—could we have a drink of water? It's beastly hot, you know, and we've walked far."

Violet turned invitingly. "Certainly. Come with me to the house," she said, dropping food at the doorstep of other coops as she led them along the worn but narrow path toward the house.

At the pump they paused, and Violet said she would get a glass.

"Don't!" protested Harvey, seizing the pump handle and the long-handled dipper hanging near. "We'll use this."

"Yes, don't want to put you to any trouble, you know," his companion said, seizing the dipper, while Harvey tried awkwardly to work the handle.

"That's no way—you turn it like a crank," Reginald protested.

But Harvey brought the water by an up-and-down motion that drew praise from the others, tho Violet's praise was silent. When thirst was quenched and they had inquired the road to town, Violet led them to the front gate and told them which way to go. But they lingered as long as they could make inconsequent remarks, until Violet's mother, wondering greatly over their appearance, came to the open door.

"I'm staying at the Fischer House," Reginald explained. "My name's Weldon, and his is Daniels—get bored, you know, we do. We want to meet the folks. Couldn't I call and get acquainted?" he asked, with the temerity of one who always has what he asks for.

"Oh, yes—come any time," was the cordial reply. "Both of you will be welcome."

"There's hospitality for us, Harv—Harry," was the answer, and both tourists doffed their hats as Violet turned in amused bewilderment toward the house.

Her mother, much perturbed, came down the path to meet her. It was an old brick walk, crumbling with age and bordered with iris, tiger-lilies and "old man." Her English mother's blue eyes searched her child's face as they met in the midst of the walk.

"Who are these young men?" she demanded.

"They are staying at the Fischer House in town," Violet said. "They are city men, mother, and they asked if they could call. They are bored. They want to meet nice people in town."

"Oh," was Mrs. Lawrence's wondering reply. "Did you ever see them before?"

"Yes, and so have you. They were the hunters that chased the little faun at the Old Settlers' picnic, you know."

The two entered the house together, the mother's hand on her child's shoulder in loving protection.

"If they are calling here, we can find out what sort of people they are like," she said, and resumed her seat with her sewing basket and her comfortable rocker near the window, from which she had seen the departure of the visitors.

The Lawrence farm being three miles from the village, it did not seem likely that the proposed call would be carried out. Mrs. Lawrence herself thought it so improbable that she did not mention the matter to her husband. And Violet, shyly hopeful, because especially impressed with the ease and good clothes of one of the men, was growing more and more hopeful that the promised call would come true. So in a few days she began furtively glancing along the road leading to the village. For a week or so she hoped vainly. Then, one evening at dusk, after the kitchen was tidied and she was in her gabled room above the living-room, she heard a whistle at the gate.

In a moment she was at the window. In the uncertain light of the day she could make out the black Fedora and the light gray suit and the tall, graceful form of "Jack Weldon." She waved to him, and started down the stairs, but her father, returning with a last load of grain from the field, had heard the whistled signal, had seen her white handkerchief waved in reply to it, and filled with amazement, descended from his seat on the load of oats, and hurried to the house just in time to meet Violet as she came downstairs. She was about to descend the back steps when he intercepted her.

"Violet, where are you going, child?" he said.

Violet drew back hastily, almost guiltily.

"Father, how you frightened me!" she cried. "I was only going out to the gate," she explained. "Why not?"

CHAPTER VIII.

LEAVING his team and load of oats where it was when he intercepted Violet, Mr. Lawrence put his arm about her and pressed her toward the front porch in plain view of the young man at the gate.

"Are you meeting some one secretly, little girl?" he asked.

Violet gave an impatient pull from her father's affectionate arm.

"Why, no, father. Dear me! I was only going to invite him into the house. It's that Mr. Weldon who has asked to call. He's stopping at the Fischer House up at the village. He's a nice man, and he told me he was bored for want of meeting some nice people. So I——"

To Violet this was a situation quite reasonable, but her father thought otherwise. He drew her to the low front porch, and said impressively:

"My little girl, you must never meet men secretly. It is dangerous—dangerous. I saw you signaling to each other. That is not the thing to do. If this young man wishes to call, let him come in as he should, and not be whistling to you at the gate."

In the dusky light Violet's face looked pale, but it whitened before her father's keen eyes as she drew away from his arm.

"Father, I never meant anything secret. I—was—going out to—I think you are real mean to say such things!" Her voice broke in anger.

"We can never be too particular," her father answered, and pointed to the door. "Go in, child, and if strange young men wish to call on you, wait until they have come to the door before you bid them welcome." And Violet saw there was nothing to do but to go in. Her father, a sturdy Briton with a beardless face (except for a thin fringe of hair below the jaw line), saw that she obeyed, and then turned back to his team just in time to see the would-be caller start off with an impatient gesture. He disappeared in the darkening night, and for once his impatience did him no good.

There was more than impatience in the darkness of Violet's gabled chamber. There was the rage of humiliation. Violet was sure that the dignity of her eighteen years had been trampled in the dust.

"Father does get on my nerves," she fumed, "he certainly does!" She clinched her fists and shook them, too angry to weep and too much disappointed to think clearly what she could do in the circumstances. "I'll not stand it—I'll never put up with it!" she cried. "He takes me for an infant! He wouldn't let Jimmie take me to the picnic. I never can do anything I want to do—and I won't stand it!"

There was more rebellion and then came more defiant thoughts and plans of escape that served to work off a little of her unfilial ire toward a too careful parent, as she regarded him, and at last she got quiet and sat down by her bedside to think over her troubles as calmly as she was able until her mother's soft voice, calling at the foot of the stairs, served to restore her to a normal quiet.

"Oh, Violet, what are you doing up there in the dark all alone? Come down, child, and play my favorite hymns for me."

Yes, that was it—harvesters and hard work all day, and nothing but hymns in the evening. Violet reviewed her program bitterly. There was never any other excitement. And if anyone did come, somebody said it was dangerous—dangerous! Now, even Jimmie was gone off to New York to make his way. He had almost asked her something. She had almost said yes to him. But goodness! Was that all a girl was ever going to have? No, indeed! There was going to be something else.

She got up then and went down to play her mother's evening hymns on the old organ, and to get whatever peace and quiet this would bring to her young, impatient heart. She had no way of knowing that Anabelle Whitcome was even now waiting wearily at her own gate for the coming of her lover. He was a tardy lover of late, and tonight he was slower than ever about keeping his tryst with her. And when at last he was seen coming from the open country instead of from town, she smothered her wonder and cried out:

"Jack, why do you keep me waiting? I've been lonely all day." She complained with the air of ownership. "Why didn't you come?" she pouted, and crossed her hands on the top of the gate for him to touch if he would. And she was sure that he would.

"Jack" was warm from his long walk. It had been a fruitless tramp, too, which put him in a bad humor, but the sight of Anabelle's round form and pleading face was still good to him. Anabelle was like a dream-girl by moonlight, her dark eyes as luminous as stars, 'tho misty now with trouble. And what was a bird in the bush compared with one in hand—what indeed? He put his warm palm on her crossed hands and lifted them to his lips.

"Poor little lambkin!" he murmured, then opened the gate and slipped a comforting arm about her waist. "And was she so lonesome?without her mate? Never mind—some day it will be different, girlie. We are going to have splendid times together, don't you know?"

They strolled up the old board walk very close together, between a beech tree and a weeping willow, between almond bushes and lilacs, and reached the porch where the faint scent of the tall phlox blooming thickly against the woodbine came to them on the evening air as they sat together in the hammock. It was cool and restful here, with a flicker of light reaching them thru the green shutters of the blind, and there followed an hour of cooing and billing that quite restored good nature between them.

At last the click of the front gate brought Anabelle to her feet.

"It's father come home from the store," she said. "Come in and talk

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"I thought of Postum but could hardly bring myself to give up the coffee.

"Finally I concluded that I owed it to myself to give Postum a trial. I got a package and carefully followed the directions, and what a delicious, nourishing, rich drink it was! Do you know, I found it very easy to shift from coffee to Postum.

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"There's a Reason" for Postum.

—sold by Grocers.

with him for a while—won't you, Jack?"

It had often occurred to Anabelle that her lover and her father did not "get on" as she had thought they would. They had met, it is true, but owing to some obscure reason, they had not become well acquainted. She expected more than this. She wanted her father to like his future son-in-law immensely. She wanted to present him with that which Heaven had denied him—a son—and one, too, in whom he could take no end of pride.

So she urged "Jack" to spend a little time within their meager family circle before going back to his hotel. And, seeing no way out of it, her sweetheart consented.

Mr. Whitcome, ready for a well-earned rest, plodded up the old board walk with his wide straw hat in his hand and his dark hair, damp from his hatbrim, pressed close to a lined forehead. His step was weary but responsible, steady-going, dependable. Proudly and patiently had John Whitcome led his simple, honorable life. He had few diversions outside of his store. Sometimes, in the lull of the afternoon trade, he slipped away with one or two retired farmers who lived in town, and played a round of croquet. Otherwise he had no amusements. He took life seriously. He taught the Sunday school scholars to live seriously. He expected them to do as he instructed. There was no other way to do, in his estimation. His respectable tread on the old board walk, in the filmy light of the moon shining upon his inclined form, approached the porch, and Anabelle, in her white gown, was there to greet him.

"Hello, father, are you home from the store? Here's Jack, father, and—we've—got a secret to tell you." She hesitated. She knew that her father was expecting something, and if "Jack" was going to be slow over his proper duties, she would make the proper advances herself. Mr. Whitcome, in his soiled linen ulster, mounted the steps and turned to take the young man's hand.

"Well, well—what's your secret?" he asked, with a faint and twisted smile. "Let's hear it."

"We—Jack and I, you know—are going to be married in a year, father. We've got it all planned. Shake hands with your future son, father, and say you are glad."

The hand that Mr. Whitcome took was too limp and lacking in cordiality to suit a critic in such matters, but no one present was in a mood to question trifles when so great an issue was before them.

"I never had a son," Mr. Whitcome smiled more and more broadly, "and I expect it will seem good to have one. Come right in, Anabelle, some lemonade will taste good." There was a tremor in his voice. "This is a little sudden, I think," he went on, as they took seats in the living-room, "a trifle sudden, but—I hope you'll be happy. God bless you, both of you!" He sat down, and Anabelle, stooping over him, left a kiss on his damp, lined forehead.

"Thanks, awfully, sir," replied "Jack," taking his blessing with a gulp. "I think a lot of Anabelle—I really do, sir."

Anabelle went after the lemonade, nervously overwrought about something and glad to escape from the room.

"So you expect to live in Boston?" asked Mr. Whitcome, his business mind alert to the future of his child, but quite blind to the possibility that there could be any one in this humdrum world who thought life was a joke and the people of it mere playthings.

"Well," replied "Jack" evasively, "that depends upon business. We're in a good line—father is, you know. He knows how to run car wheels and coaches pretty well—railroading, you know. We have an office in New York, and I may be useful there. I promised the Guv'nor I'd settle down as soon as I came back from this trip."

"I see," returned Mr. Whitcome, pleased in spite of himself over Anabelle's outlook. "There's a heap of money in railroading."

Then he let his eyes and his thoughts travel wonderingly over the handsome young fellow before him, as if he were an exotic whose relationship with himself could never occur. It was unbelievable, indeed, until Anabelle came in with the lemonade. Ah! Anabelle, his pretty daughter—she was the link that made the connection possible. Mr. Whitcome glanced from one to the other, and was glad that he had sent his daughter away to boarding-school. And he wished her mother could know about the grand future that her baby was going to have. He grew dreamy with the thought of his lost love, dreamy and placid and almost satisfied as he talked.

"Perhaps she knows—perhaps she knows," he repeated, after he had gone to his bedroom and the house was dark and still, "perhaps her mother knows all about it."

He lay a long time thinking, first of his young married life, then of those lonely years after his wife died, of Anabelle's babyhood and of later years. Anxiously, tenderly, half-fearful that all was not right, but coaxing his doubts to get behind and far away from his sturdy faith in human nature as he knew it in the world of men.

Old Fischer's stagecoach had carried Jimmie Lampson away a fortnight earlier. Jimmie's going was without demonstration on the part of his friends, the most of whom were busy with the harvest work. He carried his telescope suitcase that bulged with his belongings, together with enough lunch, as his mother declared, to last him until he could "get a start in New York City." The lunch included rations for two days, with plenty of harvest apples filling the corners and spaces. Jimmie had said good-by to Violet in the midst of the family circle. There was no privacy or secrecy about his behavior, and he went cheered with the good will of Violet's parents, who hoped he would make good and come back and tell them all about it.

Violet was quite disconsolate after he had gone. The hours dragged so that she began to think of her late anger and humiliation with a renewed impatience. It was one afternoon not long after our Prince of Hearts had tried to see her that she resolved to break the monotony that so wearied her by walking into town "to get the mail."

No sooner thought of than done. Violet hurried with the dinner dishes, put on a white-and-blue print gown, tied on a sun hat with blue ribbons and a bow under her chin, and set forth. The ribbons matched her eyes, and a pink rose that hung from the hat almost against her two brown curls, long and glistening in the sun, was a good match for her cheeks. But Violet was unconscious of her beauty. She was conscious only of wanting to satisfy the restless ache within—call it wild youth, or call it the mating instinct, as you please.

"I'm going to walk up to Ashville and bring the mail, mother," she explained, as she stood ready at the door. "Shall I get anything at Whitcome's?"

"Yes, we need shelf-paper—get two pieces of the white," her mother smiled fondly, "and don't stay too long at Anabelle's."

"Maybe I won't stop there," Violet replied, and was off.

How good it was to be alive. How good it was to be free. How good the cool breeze, fresh from the Canadian hills, felt on her burning face. The sunshine, the blue dome above, her own fairy feet with wings of hope speeding them over the beaten path with its fringe of long grass and its forest of tall weeds with their musty blooms, all seemed very fair to the girl-pilgrim setting forth upon her new adventures.

Secretly she hoped she would "happen" to meet Mr. Weldon. But on that she would not allow herself to dwell. She stopped at the bridge that crossed a narrow, grassy stream and made funny grimaces at her own reflection, then went on humming a tune and rapping the old board fence at her right with her folded parasol. There was plenty of time. She had hours of bright sunshine and blue sky for her own before it was time to help with supper.

It was a pretty and unhurried Violet that entered the village and strolled past the Whitcome store, past the hotel veranda on which several men were gathered about a notice that Old Fischer himself was just tacking up on his weathered clapboards. It was a hand-printed notice, and a group of men and boys were wonderingly reading it.

Violet almost knew what the notice was about. She had heard the Harvest Home festival discussed for a week by the harvesters who were helping her father in the fields. The notice was about the festival—the dancing, the sale of lunch boxes, and the fun of getting the wrong partner. And "Mr. Weldon" was one of the men who was reading the notice. Violet blushed when she saw him turn toward her. Would he remember? Yes, he was taking off his hat to her and smiling. He was even coming down the three steps of the veranda to meet her.

"It's the gracious lady of the water-dipper, isn't it?" he inquired. "And how do you do today?"

"Pretty well," Violet replied.

"It's a great day for a walk, isn't it?" he asked, falling into step without asking permission.

Violet's cheeks again reddened. How did men dare do such bold things? It was nice, tho. And what must a girl do in such a case? And how could she make him do as her father said he ought to do?

"I was just wishing some one would come along and kidnap me," "Mr. Weldon" remarked. "I was as lonely as a polecat on top of Mount Blanc."

Violet smiled her pleasure in being the one to rescue him. How fine he looked in those white flannels. His elegance and his easy ways put her own commoner clothing to the blush, and her replies to his gay remarks were shy monosyllables. Ashville itself in homespun clothes and boorish ways seemed to draw away from his ultra elegance both of manner and apparel. He assured her it was mighty nice of her to take pity on a fellow who was being eaten up with ennui.

"But you know some of the young people—you know Anabelle Whitcome, don't you?"

"Yes, but Anabelle is away now. She has an aunt in Augusta. She's gone down there for a visit," was his explanation.

"That's news to me," exclaimed Violet, wondering what could have taken her friend away so suddenly.

"Yes, she's gone. Anyway Anabelle's awfully educated, isn't she? She's away up on books and such things. She keeps me stretching."

Violet grew amazed. "Why," she gasped, "I think it's awfully nice to know about books—don't you?"

"Not so's you could notice," replied "Jack," with a merry glance into her upraised eyes of blue. "If you educate the women they'll have us men a-swimming—that is, to overtake 'em," he added by way of explaining his extraordinary stand. "We men can't get the pace they set for us. It sure is a killer. Now, give me a sweet and modest little girl with good common sense, and if she'd let me do all the fighting for her, why I'd be the whole pumpkin. That's what makes the world go round," he added, philosophically.

Of course Violet had never heard the like of it. She was more than pleased to know what he thought about educated women. It amused her immensely, and took away the sore place that she had felt ever since Anabelle had come home. Her thoughts were interrupted.

"I'd like to call for you and take you riding some evening. Would you care to go to the festival with me?"

Violet blushed for very shame over her home restrictions.

"I was going with father and mother in the carriage," she began, "but——"

"But—but," he smiled down at her, mockingly, "but you'll like to go with a young man I know—eh? It's awfully good of you to take pity on a fellow. My chum, Harry Daniels, has gone off to our camp and left me stranded here with a cough." Here he coughed so affectedly that Violet laughed outright. He was so funny she had to laugh.

"Say, I can't fool you, can I?" he grinned, with a nod of approval. "And I'll bet you'd be willing to let me get out my buggy and happen along just in time to pick you up and take you home this very afternoon. That's just what I'll do, too. Wise thought of mine—eh?"

Violet was silently smiling. What a bold, nice fellow he was! She turned back at once.

"I must get the mail first," she said, "and go to the store for my mother."

"All right, and be looking out for me," was his reply, as they parted.

The plan was carried out without a hitch. And there followed other afternoon rides of growing delight, when a sense of danger and when honor and girlish reserve were all swept away before the fascinations that were spread before Violet's youthful mind.

"Isn't it wonderful to be alive?" she asked him one afternoon, when the sky was bright with the sun's glory and purity and fire and the song of the reapers was far and the song of the birds was near.

"Right-o!" exclaimed "Jack," dropping his arm behind her. "It sure is immense. But it is a bigger thing to be loved. I think that is the only thing in the world, Vi," he murmured, and drew her gently toward him. "I know you are the only girl for me," he declared, "and I want you to like me just a wee bit in return. Can you do that, little Vi?" he urged, trying not to see the startled look that came into her pansy-blue eyes.

"I—I don't know," she faltered. "I liked you at first."

More than this she would not say, but when he lifted her down at the front gate that was screened by lilacs and locust trees, her cheeks were scarlet and there was a pain—a joyful pain—in her heart.

(Continued Next Week.)

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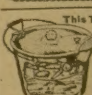

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Edgewater's Secret
Or, The Devouring Sands

By Clarissa Mackie

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CHAPTER VIII.

I WAS leaving the pergola when Ysobel Dreer slipped her hand thru my arm and held me a reluctant prisoner.

"Please don't go yet, Miss Ames. I know we have never been properly introduced but that does not matter. What are you doing at Edgewater?" There was keen curiosity in her voice and in her searching eyes. The slackness of her form had given away to rigidity. Her whole appearance seemed to change—to stiffen from its air of languid indifference to alert watchfulness, as if she had girded on an armor. "What are you doing here at this lonely place?"

"I am Mrs. Hodder's secretary," I answered. "I wouldn't be here otherwise!" I added impulsively.

"And you do not like it—you are thinking of leaving Edgewater. What is it you fear?" she asked quickly.

"Everything!" I breathed quickly.

She gave me a long look as if striving to tear the secrets from my bosom.

"Do not go now," she said in a low tone. "It is best to stay on—nay," she whispered hurriedly in my ear, "it is SAFER! Come, Miss Ames, I hear the breakfast gong—you will want to try those delicious grapes." She caught my hand and hurried me into the house.

Mrs. Hilyer and Sara Hodder were already there, and Felix Hilyer entered the opposite door as I came in with Ysobel Dreer.

My hostess made a place for me between her own seat and Sara Hodder's, and both of them were very gracious to me; it was almost as if they strove to banish from my mind the recollection of that painful interview in the bluff path. Ysobel Dreer talked brilliantly, and Sara Hodder followed her lead, and they tossed the ball of conversation back and forth while Felix Hilyer smiled and frowned and his wife sat like a white statue before her untouched food.

Susan waited upon the table, and I wondered if Martha had been dismissed. Of course I could not inquire, but I determined to find out in some other way.

Just before we arose from the table Felix Hilyer made a statement in his offhand manner.

"I was obliged to dismiss Forbes this morning, my love," he said to his wife, "and Miss Dreer has been so kind as to recommend her own chauffeur in his place; she is going abroad and does not need him."

"That is very kind of Miss Dreer," returned Mrs. Hillyer, with a constrained smile; "but I am surprised at Forbes—he has always been a model servant."

"He appeared before me intoxicated," said Felix, his voice rising indignantly. "Of course I could not endure that—I sent him away at once. Miss Dreer and I rode over to Deep Village and wired to town for her man. He is coming down on the 11:15."

"Then we will not be inconvenienced in the least," Mrs. Hilyer remarked, with a return to her old poise of manner. "Is he an American, Miss Dreer?"

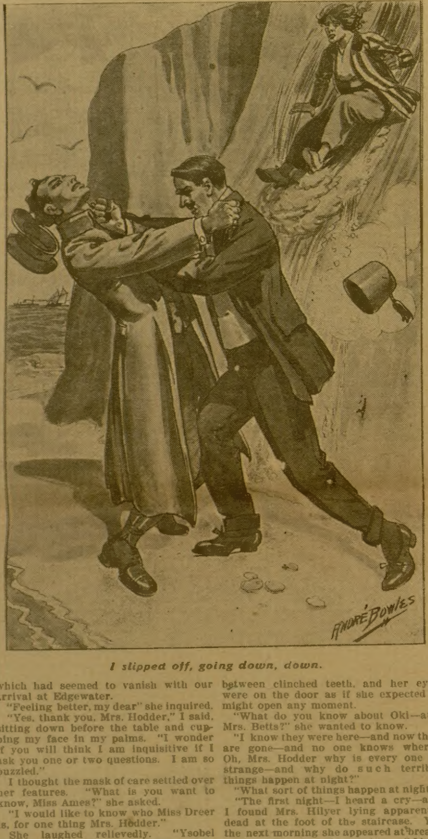
I thought Ysobel Dreer hesitated for the fraction of a second before she answered: "He is a young Canadian, Mrs. Hilyer. His name is Anthony Wayne."

I was startled. My lover had been born in Canada—his name was Arthur Anthony Wayne—but of course there could be no connection between my Arthur and Ysobel's chauffeur—so I told myself, but the uneasiness clung to me long after the company had scattered.

I went up to my room and finished all the work I had on hand, then, taking my notebook I went to Mrs. Hodder's sitting-room and tapped on the door.

"Come in," she called, and I entered.

She was sitting in the bay window with some letters before her, and she glanced up with the old familiar smile



I slipped off, going down, down.

which had seemed to vanish with our arrival at Edgewater.

"Feeling better, my dear" she inquired.

"Yes, thank you, Mrs. Hodder," I said, sitting down before the table and cupping my face in my palms. "I wonder if you will think I am inquisitive if I ask you one or two questions. I am so puzzled."

I thought the mask of care settled over her features. "What is you want to know, Miss Ames?" she asked.

"I would like to know who Miss Dreer is, for one thing Mrs. Hodder."

She laughed relievedly. "Ysobel Dreer is a well-known newspaper writer, my dear—a wonderfully clever creature—and Felix Hilyer is quite wild about her unusual looks. He is painting a picture of her now."

"Oh!" I breathed freely; then I added with unusual shrewdness on my part: "I didn't know newspaper women could afford motor cars and chauffeurs to drive them."

"It seems that Ysobel can. And—any more questions, you inquisitive child?"

I nodded. "I am wondering where Martha is?"

"Martha?" She was staring, frankly astonished.

"I—I didn't see her at breakfast, and I thought—I thought——" I hesitated at the stern look in her kind eyes.

"You thought—what?" she asked mechanically.

I leaned over the table until I could touch her arm.

"I am wondering," I said, in a low tone, "I am wondering if she went away in the manner that Oki—and Mrs. Betts did!"

Mrs. Hodder caught my hands in hers and clutched them painfully. She spoke between clinched teeth, and her eyes were on the door as if she expected it might open any moment.

"What do you know about Oki—and Mrs. Betts?" she wanted to know.

"I know they were here—and now they are gone—and no one knows where! Oh, Mrs. Hodder why is every one so strange—and why do such terrible things happen at night?"

"What sort of things happen at night?"

"The first night—I heard a cry—and I found Mrs. Hilyer lying apparently dead at the foot of the staircase. Yet the next morning she appeared at breakfast, unhurt. And—last night——" I hesitated.

She gripped my hands tighter.

"Last night?" she moaned. "What did you see last night? There was nothing to see, Cicely! There was nothing to see!"

"I saw Mrs. Hilyer come from the bluff path!" I said doggedly.

Sara Hodder arose to her tall height and lifted me to my feet.

"Cicely Ames," she said tragically, "there are many things that cannot be explained to you—things that I do not understand myself—but if you value your life, child, don't repeat that remark again!"

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER this solemn warning Mrs. Hodder resumed her seat, and then, as if nothing unusual had happened to break the routine of our daily work, she began to dictate letters, and sent me away with a book crammed full of shorthand notes and some of the fears driven out of my head.

My typewriter clicked busily all the morning. I became absorbed in my task, and forgot that I was living in an atmosphere of mystery. The hours slipped by until the luncheon gong sounded.

I changed my dress and went down to find the table set on the veranda overlooking the Sound. Every one seemed very light-hearted. Ysobel Dreer told of her last sitting in the studio and declared that Felix had made her appear gaunt and famished-looking—a libel upon his hospitality. Mrs. Hilyer was amused by Ysobel's light chatter, and Sara Hodder spoke of attending the county fair the next day.

"We can motor over," she said. "It will do us all good. What do you say, Beatrice?"

"I am sorry I did not think of it first," smiled Mrs. Hilyer. "I am afraid I am a wretched hostess; of course you will go, Felix?" she asked, turning to her husband.

Mr. Hilyer thoughtfully regarded the end of his fork. "Really, my dear, I'm afraid that I cannot. I have some work that must be finished."

"Work that cannot wait one more day, most indolent of men?" teased Ysobel Dreer.

"Work that must be accomplished tomorrow," he said firmly. "You must go without me. I believe it's going to be a fine day."

"When are we to see the portrait?" asked Sara Hodder, suddenly.

She addressed Felix Hilyer, and he turned his sleepy eyes upon her with a flicker of interest. "Would you really like to see it?" he asked.

"Of course we are all interested, Felix."

"I will finish it tomorrow," he said, "and tomorrow evening you may come down and see it—it's a wonderful thing."

"I am sure it is," said Mrs. Hodder, and strangely enough not one of us saw any humor in his conceited remark.

"I wish you would have the car brought around, Felix," said his wife, as we arose from the table. "I have some marketing to do in the village."

"Suppose I send Anthony around at two o'clock," was his suggestion.

"Very well," she said.

I went back to my work, disappointed that I was not going to accompany them to the village; I wanted to inquire for a letter. I had told Arthur to send it in care of General Delivery, and I was longing for the solace of his wise advice. I decided that I must venture another walk along the beach, altho I dreaded its loneliness. My little store of courage was fast slipping from me in the atmosphere of Edgewater. I was ashamed to say anything more about leaving the place, and determined to be blind and deaf to all unhappy influences.

I heard the motor car come and go, but the porte-cochere was on the other side of the house, and I did not leave my room to see who had gone away. A strange stillness settled over the place. The tide was coming in—an unusually high tide at this season—and I could hear it eating at the sandy bluff.

From a distance—the direction of the studio, I thought—came silver threads of melody. Felix Hilyer was playing on his violin.

At four o'clock I covered my typewriter and took a refreshing bath. It was five, when arrayed in a white woolen frock and sweater, I stepped into one of the paths and walked toward the rustic entrance gates. I had just reached the gates when there came the purring jar of an approaching motor car; I drew back as a long, black machine swept around into the drive.

The three women sitting in the tonneau waved their hands at me, but I made no response; I was looking at the man in trim chauffeur's livery. His gloved hands were on the steering wheel, and his grave eyes regarded me indifferently.

Before I could utter a sound, the car had passed me, and I was left alone in the sunset light, with clinched hands and staring eyes that saw only one thing—that thing was the vision of my lover, Arthur Wayne, driving Felix Hilyer's car and looking at me without recognition in his dear eyes.

I stamped my foot in sudden rage—I would leave this place now—at once.

The gates were wide open—no one could stop me. I always carried my little store of money in a chamois pocket in my petticoat, so I could get home without returning to the house. In another moment I was out in the highroad and fleeing toward Deep Village as fast as my light feet could carry me.

The sun was sinking low behind the trees, and it sent long, slanting shadows down the well-oiled road. I had never traversed the highway to Deep Village, but the sign boards pointed the way. I was passing along a rather lonely spot when I heard an approaching motor coming from the direction of Edgewater.

I stepped into the thicket, but my white dress betrayed me. The car stopped, and Felix Hilyer jumped out and approached me. He was, of course, smiling.

"Dear Miss Ames," he said, pleasantly reproving me, "if you wish to go to Deep Village, why not go in the car? Surely, we cannot allow our guests to walk that unreasonable distance."

"I was not walking," I flashed back; "I was running!"

He laughed. "That makes it all the worse! It really sounds as if you wanted to get away from Edgewater! But we cannot allow that—not yet. Mrs. Hodder is much worried over your disappearance. Anthony, turn the car about, please. Miss Ames has decided to postpone her walk to the village."

I stepped out into the road and took my seat in the tonneau. I did not lift my eyes to look at Arthur Anthony Wayne. Half an hour before he had cut me dead, and I resented it. I have the temper that tradition says accompanies red hair.

CHAPTER X.

LIKE a sulky child I refused to eat any dinner, and at once retired to my room, where I sat in the twilight, staring out at the water. It was not time for the moon to rise, but the lights of the living-room below sent shimmering red reflections upon the restless waves.

Back of my sore heart and my injured vanity there was one grain of common sense; and this redeeming atom told me that Arthur's appearance at Edgewater as a chauffeur had a serious motive; of course he had received my letter, and this, perhaps, was his response to it. But what connection did he have with Ysobel Dreer? I had never heard of her before. It was a secret he had hidden from me, and the thought rankled. Even if his presence here was fraught with the greatest significance, there was no reason why he could not have vouchsafed me one glance of mutual understanding—I felt so alone. I became fiercely jealous of Ysobel Dreer—perhaps because my eyes are really green—and I felt that I hated her.

Breaking in upon this stormy mood came a tap at my door. I opened it, and discovered the woman of whom I had been thinking—Ysobel. She wore the slinky frock in which I had first seen her, and was hung with all her green ornaments.

"Oh!" I said, a little ungraciously. "Will you come in?"

"Just for a moment," she said, slipping inside the room, with a wriggle of her thin body. "They told me you had a headache. I am so sorry—I hope you are feeling better."

"Thank you, I am," I said. "Won't you sit down, Miss Dreer?"

"I cannot. I am to play accompaniments for Mr. Hilyer. They want you to come down and join them. Will you?"

"I'd rather not. I think I will go to bed."

"If you change your mind, Miss Ames, come down—you will enjoy the music," she said cordially. "Remember we are all going to the county fair tomorrow. What a lovely view you have from this window—it must be very extensive." She threw up the sash and leaned out gazing westward.

"One has an excellent view of the bluff walk," I said sarcastically.

She faced me quickly. "What do you know about the bluff walk?" she demanded.

"I know more than I'm supposed to," I laughed. "Mr. Hilyer has forbidden me to go there—and this morning I ventured there only to be driven away by Mrs. Hilyer!"

"Mrs. Hilyer? I didn't know she frequented the bluff path!" she said, in a surprised tone.

"It appears that she is so fond of it that she walks there at night," I returned bitterly.

She laid her hands on my shoulders, and in the deepening gloom I could see her amber eyes shining like a cat's.

"Cicely Ames," she breathed tensely, "never mention to any one that you saw Mrs. Hilyer in the bluff path! Will you promise me that you will not until I give you permission?"

I don't know why I nodded assent, but I did. She dropped a kiss on my cheek and vanished from the room with hardly a sound.

I bolted the door and switched on the lights. I determined to read a while and see if I could not grow sleepy. As I picked up a book, I saw on the table a letter where no letter had been before.

My heart beat faster as I recognized Arthur's handwriting on the envelope. It had not come through the mail. How had it reached my room? Arthur had not left the car until my return from my escapade, and I had been in the room ever since.

I broke the seal and read its contents.

"Dearest," wrote Anthony, in a hurried scrawl: "I received your letter, and as you see have responded in the way I thought best. It is a strange coincidence that you should have gone to Edgewater at the same time when, in a business way, I had become intensely interested in the place and its people. Like the dear, sensible girl that you are, you will understand that while I am sailing under false colors, any communication between us may be looked upon with suspicion—nay, danger. As soon as possible I will remove you from this environment. In the meantime keep to your own room as much as possible, and above all things AVOID THE BLUFF PATH. I cannot write you more particularly now—only trust me—and believe in me despite the evidence of your own sweet eyes. Destroy this letter at once. **Beloved, good night.**"

There was no signature. I read it again and again, until the words were graven on my memory; then I put it in the fireplace and burned envelope and letter. When the last charred fragment had flown up the chimney, I felt happier than I had since my arrival at Edgewater. Arthur was near at hand, and I had received his commands. Yet, meaning to obey him to the letter, it happened that I was to fly in the face of his orders and enter the bluff path—and learn its terrible secret.

CHAPTER XI.

I DECIDED to go down to the living-room. My mind was at peace now that I knew my lover was keeping guard, and my heart beat in tune with the dainty minuet Felix Hilyer was playing as I entered the room.

They made a place for me with little murmurs of pleasant greeting. Ysobel Dreer was seated at the piano, and Felix Hilyer had his accustomed position on the hearth rug, his cheek caressing his violin. Beatrice Hilyer and Sara Hodder were busied with embroidery.

It was an hour I never forgot. Felix's playing enchanted me with its delicate phrasing, its light, masterly touch, with never a deeper note of tragedy. It was like the man himself; full of airy, impractical fancies—dreamy and pleasant like life on a tropical island. I could almost hear the wind in the palm trees and the hushing murmur of waves on a shell-strewn beach.

Ysobel's playing was an ideal accompaniment—the piano formed a vague background for the music of the violin.

All at once Ysobel's fingers slipped from the keys. Felix had dropped the theme and was improvising in a way he had, and it exerted a peculiar influence over me—I could not look at him. My eyes wandered to one of the windows and stayed there, while in fancy I heard the wind rushing thru the pines and cedars — IN THE BLUFF PATH. I thought I heard the tide lipping the rocks forty feet below; I thought I heard the scratching crawl of the little fiddler crabs edging around the gray circle on the sandy beach. Felix Hilyer played all these things and something more—something indefinably menacing in the long-drawn notes, growing deeper—deeper—and more abysmal.

Mrs. Hilyer arose from her chair, her face worn into aged lines. She looked toward Felix's gay, laughing face with somber eyes.

"Don't play that any more," she said in a dead voice.

Felix played on—those deep, drawing notes. Beatrice Hilyer shot a look at him—a look of deadly hatred—and left the room. Presently a door closed on the floor above.

Mr. Hilyer dropped the violin into its case and snapped the cover. He was still smiling, a queer, satirical twist to his mouth. Sara Hodder was jabbing her needle at random in and out of her linen. Ysobel Dreer was regarding Felix thru half-closed lids.

I felt very uncomfortable. My eyes went back to the window. For an instant I glimpsed a man's face; as the eyes met mine the face vanished. Who was the intruder? Surely not Arthur, or I would have recognized him. Should I tell Mrs. Hodder? It might be a thief who would later enter the house.

Presently Ysobel Dreer yawned and took herself off to bed; Felix said he was going out for a smoke, and went away thru the veranda door.

"Are you going upstairs soon, Mrs. Hodder?" I asked.

"Right away, my dear," she answered, folding up her work.

She put her arm around me as we crossed the hall to the staircase. When we had reached the landing and were out of view of the lower hall, I clutched her closely and whispered about the man I had seen.

"We are watched," I ended excitedly.

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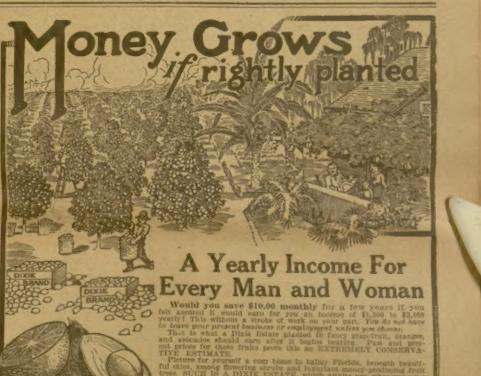
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"Thank God!" was her surprising answer.

We parted at my door, and I went inside and turned the key. Much to my surprise I went right to sleep and did not awaken until dawn. It was a clear day, but the rising sun was partly obscured by a smoky haze that covered land and sea. There was a faint smell of charred wood. I had heard them talking about the forest fires that were raging in various parts of the Island, and I wondered if the lack of rain would endanger beautiful Edgewater; Felix Hilyer had expressed little concern over the fires.

Thru the haze the sun was magnified to enormous size. I dressed and went down to the veranda. No one was stirring, and quite disregarding Arthur's command, I turned into the bluff path and went and sat down on a rustic bench at the steepest part of the declivity.

The tide was half out, and the beach was alive with black fiddlers. The wind was blowing thru the pines, but the salty smell of the sea and the fragrance of the pines and cedars were lost in that smoky atmosphere. There was something menacing in that pall of faint gray that had stolen over sea and land and drawn itself before the sun. It was as if even God's blue sky and sunshine were being withdrawn from Edgewater.

I sat there idly watching the fiddler crabs, when my foot touched a round stone under the bench. I gave it a push, and the stone bounded over the edge, and skimming the sliding sand, struck the beach and vanished. I stared and rubbed my eyes. Where was the stone? I dislodged another stone and sent it after the first—another—and still another; then, only then, did I turn and flee from the bluff path. I raced like a mad woman down the first open road that led away from the bluff. It carried me into the thickly wooded section of the park, and finally I sank down in a billow of dead autumn leaves and stared the secret of the bluff face to face.

Arthur came and found me there, and because we were out of sight of the house he ventured to take me in his arms and comfort me. He whispered words of warning in my ear, and made me swear that I would be silent as the grave concerning what I had seen and heard and what I had discovered. I was on the point of telling him that the bluff path had given up to me, Cicely Ames, its dread secret, but suddenly he thrust me aside and strode toward the garage. I turned and saw Mrs. Hilyer slowly pacing among the trees. Whether she had seen me with her chauffeur I did not know, but the look she gave me was terrible in its menacing darkness. She did not respond to my timid greeting, but went on and on until the trees hid her from view.

Breakfast was an erratic meal that morning; Mrs. Hodder was served in her own room; Mrs. Hilyer did not appear at all; I ate a bit of toast and drank a cup of strong coffee, while Felix Hilyer sat opposite, hidden behind the morning newspaper. Ysobel Dreer came in and helped herself to a peach, and wandered out with merely a nod of greeting. Susan waited upon the table, and I noted that her round face had lost its fresh color and wore a look of pale terror.

I was glad to escape to my room where I found some work to do—re-typing an old manuscript for Mrs. Hodder. She came and told me that they were ready to start for the county fair at Pleasanton.

"Are they—are they all going?" I asked.

The pupils of her eyes contracted. "All except Mr. Hilyer; he will follow later in his runabout."

I was relieved, still I remembered the man who had lurked around the veranda the night before, and reminded her, but she laughed grimly.

"Thank Heaven, child, for no danger greater than that!" was her odd reply.

I joined them at the door, shrugging on my top coat. I noted that Ysobel Dreer sat beside Arthur, and I felt a pang of jealousy that this was so—it would have comforted me merely to have felt his closeness but I was wedged in between my hostess and Sara Hodder.

The car glided down the drive and swung thru the gates, turning to the right and away from Deep Village. Pleasanton was ten miles distant, and the road lay thru the beautiful North Shore region. But as we traveled the smoke became denser, and presently bits of charred leaves and twigs floated over our heads.

"There must be fires over this way," commented Sara Hodder, and just then we met a motor car whose occupant hailed us.

"Going to the fair?" he asked.

"Yes," said Arthur.

"You may as well go back; the woods this side of Pleasanton are a furnace of flame. I'm on my way to Deep Village to get some fire fighters. Wind's changed to the west, and it's driving the fire toward Deep Village."

"Thank you," said Arthur, as the motorist went on his way. Then, touching his cap, he spoke to Mrs. Hilyer. "What shall I do, ma'am?" he asked.

"You had better turn around and go home," said Beatrice Hilyer.

We retraced our way to Edgewater, now almost fleeing before the drifting cinders. The sun felt burning hot—I thought I could feel the blast of the fiery burning woods, but it was only my fevered fancy. We saw no signs of Felix Hilyer who was to follow us.

Just as we turned into the gates of Edgewater, Beatrice Hilyer grasped my arm in a viselike hold, and whispered to Mrs. Hodder:

"Sara, I forgot all about Susan and Maggie! What if we should be too late?"

CHAPTER XII.

WE were halfway up the drive, when the car slowed down and Arthur leaped out, racing toward the bluff. Ysobel Dreer shifted into the driver's seat and took the steering wheel in skilled hands.

"Steady!" she called over her shoulder to us three women behind her, and with this warning to command our nerves, she guided the car to the door. "My advice is to go upstairs and remain there. Everything will come out all right," she said, as Mrs. Hilyer would have demurred.

They reached the front hall before they missed me. I was turning the corner of the house.

"Cicely, come back!" called Sara Hodder. "Come back this instant!"

But I shook my head. "I am going after Arthur. He is down there—AND HE DOES NOT KNOW!" and I sped toward the bluff path.

I reached the brink just in time to witness a terrible struggle between Arthur and Felix Hilyer. They were down on the beach, wrestling, and despite his short statue and slight limbs, Felix must have possessed muscles of steel and iron, for steadily, inch by inch he was pressing my lover's big muscular form toward that gray patch in the sand at the foot of the bluff.

The fiddler crabs were scurrying away in all directions, as the men thrashed to and fro. I called once to Arthur, but he did not hear me—the waves were splashing among the rocks beyond the beach.

Altho I knew that death in its most horrible form lay before me, I took my life in my hands, for Arthur's sake. He could not hear my warning cries, and in another moment he would be beyond help.

I sat down on the brink and prepared to slide down the sandy declivity. Steps came running along the bluff path. There was Mrs. Hilyer, wild-eyed and crying; then Sara Hodder, screaming for me not to move. There was Ysobel Dreer bringing up the rear with a revolver in her hand.

I threw them a laughing farewell, and slipped off, going down, down the sliding yellow sand toward that menacing gray spot whose edge Arthur Wayne and Felix Hilyer touched in their mad wrestling.

I was not laughing now; I was praying as I had never prayed before. I had almost reached the foot when Felix Hilyer saw me. His momentary lapse of vigilance gave Arthur an instant's advantage, but Felix overcame it with maniacal fury.

Arthur's feet were almost into the gray sand when I, sliding down, swerved slightly and struck him with the weight of my body. It sent him staggering away from the gray sand, and he fell to the ground with Felix Hilyer under him.

As if at some signal a score of men appeared from behind tree and bush and jutting rock. One of them listened to my story, and they formed a guard around the gray circle. Felix Hilyer was writhing in the hold of two burly men, while Arthur Wayne, white as death itself, came and took me in his arms.

"My dear! my dear!" he murmured.

"The quicksand—he was pushing you into it!" I cried faintly, and then the scene swam before my eyes and I lost consciousness.

I opened my eyes in my room at Edgewater. Ysobel Dreer and Sara Hodder sat beside my bed; the latter held a dose of aromatic spirits to my lips.

"Drink this, Cicely," she said gently; "and when you have rested a while we will tell you all about it."

"Arthur?" I asked faintly.

"He is all right," she assured me, and I slept for a while.

When I awoke they were still sitting there talking in low tones. Mrs. Hodder looked as tho she had been weeping.

"You are going to tell me about it," I reminded them; "but I discovered the secret of the bluff, myself."

"How?" shuddered Sara Hodder.

"I loosened a stone, and it fell, skipping down the slope until it vanished in the gray sand—even the little crabs avoided it—and the stone sank into the quicksand and was drawn down, down—just as poor Oki disappeared, and Mrs. Betts, and——" I was sobbing wildly.

"Hush!" soothed Sara Hodder. "Be calm, Cicely, or I will go away and not tell you the rest until another time.

"A year ago, Mrs. Hilyer, who is my cousin, confided in me that her husband was an epileptic; she had feared that during one of his fits some harm might come to him; she never thought of herself. Just before our visit here it appears his disease took a homicidal form, and that accounts for the vanishing of his valet, poor Oki. I never would have brought you here, Cicely, had we dreamed that Felix had become a murderer, or was even dangerous. We only suspected; we did not know.

"The night of our arrival Beatrice heard a strangled cry and hurried down stairs. In the lower hall she discovered her husband bearing the unconscious form of old Mrs. Betts. He dropped the housekeeper and turned upon his wife, felling her with a blow, and then, snatching up his victim, disappeared out of doors. Beatrice, recovering consciousness, discovered herself wet with blood from a wound in her arm; she had fallen against the brass arm of the newelpost light and gashed herself deeply.

"Faint with loss of blood, she dragged herself up to my room, and she was there when you tapped at my door that night. When you saw her, Cicely, she was lying there unconscious; it is not strange that you thought her dead. We tried to hush up the matter until we could find out the truth. Felix appeared the next morning entirely unconscious of what had happened the night before; he was his old charming self. Wild with anxiety, Beatrice appealed to me for help. I sent for Ysobel Dreer—an old friend of mine, and a woman who easily charmed Felix. He had been painting her portrait, and so she responded to my telephone message by writing to him and begging him to give her a final sitting. She has been doing a great deal of private investigating—detective work, in plain words—and had often employed a clever young lawyer of some astuteness. That he proved to be your sweetheart is merely a coincidence in this sad story.

"She came down and instantly com-

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municated with Mr. Wayne, who arrived in the guise of a chauffeur. In turn he sent for a large number of plain-clothes men, who haunted the place for a day. They suspected Felix, but they did not know how he had disposed of his victims. The bluff path was under suspicion. Beatrice had wondered, too, and one night she had gone to the bluff with a bundle prepared for the purpose, and tossed it over. It vanished—how she did not know. You saw her that night.

"Yesterday we dismissed Martha—but she was detained at the home of a friend. For the same reason we did not allow you to run away, Cicely—Felix had all the acuteness of a madman, and we must not allow any one to go away with Edgewater secrets on their lips.

"Today we went to the fair—we were coming back anyway, for Mr. Wayne and Ysobel had planned to surprise Mr. Hilyer. Mr. Wayne saw Felix going to the bluff path, and leaped from the car and pursued him. Felix ran down the slope, leaping over the gray patch, and Mr. Wayne imitated him, saving his own life by the action.

"When you saw their struggles and saved Mr. Wayne's life, the secret of the bluff was given up forever. It is odd that none of the household knew of the quicksand. Wapping said it must have been uncovered during the summer when Felix was here alone with a gang of workmen who were engaged in shoring up the bank, preparatory to building a flight of steps. The work was suddenly abandoned.

"That is all, except that Mr. Hilyer has been removed to a sanatorium, and the specialist in whose care he is does not give us much hope of recovery. His heart is weak, and he may die in one of these dreadful fits, at any moment.

"The picture of Ysobel is the saddest thing of all. It is a jumble and riot of colors with no face—nothing but mad splashes and daubs of paint. He said it was a masterpiece! It was the last effort of a decaying mind.

"Tonight we leave Edgewater forever. Beatrice will come to me, and you, too, Cicely, will resume your matter of fact labors until Arthur Wayne prepares a home for you."

"Oh, how strange it all is, Mrs. Hodder!" I shuddered. "You could never conceive such a terrible story!"

"No," she sighed, "because fiction is so tame beside actual fact!"

That night the forest fires reached Edgewater, and when another day dawned there was nothing left of the estate save a forest of blackened tree trunks and the smoking ruins of the beautiful home.

Perhaps this baptismal fire will cleanse the place of its dark tragedy, but the memory of those few days still haunts my dreams.

The End.

* * *

A Fish Story.

A correspondent from Cheshire, England, says: "I came upon a small boy not long ago who was moodily fishing with an improvised rod and hook in the muddy waters of the canal. I cannot but believe that he will make a great fisherman some day, for he seemed to have the dogged perseverance necessary for the craft. But he was clearly far from happy. He paid no attention to me at all, but mournfully pursued the matter in hand. 'What are you doing?' I asked him at last. 'Fishing for snigs,' he replied in a lifeless voice. 'What are snigs?' I inquired. 'I don't know,' he replied, drearily. 'I've never caught any yet.'"

* * *

Didn't Ride Down.

A sculptor of note once told of a janitor in a downtown office building.

"Not long ago I had occasion to go in and out of the building several times in one forenoon, and I noticed that this janitor had ridden up in the same elevator with me a number of times.

"'Henry,' I said, at last, 'this is the fifth time I have ridden up with you, but I have not seen you come down once.'

"'No, sah,' said Henry, 'yo' see, sah, Ah been washin' windows on de eleventh floor, an' ebery now an' then Ah misses mah hold an' falls out, sah.'"

* * *

An Unavoidable Disappointment.

Brudder Johnson was a pompous negro who took an active part in church work. One night the preacher said: "Brudder Johnson, will you lead us in prayah?"

"Ah'm sorry to disappoint de Lawd tonight, pahson," replied Brudder Johnson, "but Ah has a cold on mah chest."

BUILDING.

He built his house with greatest care,
'Tis meet that I should mention
The walls, the floors, the carven stair
Received his strict attention
He labored long from sun to sun,
He filled each fleeting minute;
But when at last the house was done
It had no windows in it!

No windows in the parlor wall,
No windows in the bedrooms,
No windows anywhere at all—
[illegible]
Then he [illegible]
[illegible]
His [illegible]
But windows were not in it!

His house was dismal, cold, and dark—
There is no name in telling
That many made this same remark
"It is no goodly dwelling!"
So he grew gloomy, quick to strife
The moral? Here I'll pin it
Thus fares the man who builds his life
Without some pleasure in it.

* * *

PEOPLE'S NAMES.

"If a man comes along whose name is Smith," said the young woman who was telling the story, "or Jones, and asks me to marry him, I shall accept instantly and say 'Thank you,' into the bargain! Listen to the things that happened to my sister and myself on our trip West all because our name is Mayburn! And because Cousin Charlie's name is Dutton!

"We thought it would be a clever thing to stop in and see the Fisks, who live in Los Angeles, and who have wasted reams of paper and gallons of ink imploring us to visit them. So we telephoned from our hotel in Pasadena and asked if we might come over Thursday. The sweet-voiced young person who answered the 'phone said Mrs. Fisk was out, but she knew she would be delighted to see us, and that we must come in time for luncheon. She added that she was Mrs. Fisk's daughter-in-law; so, of course, it was all right.

"'The Misses Mayburne and Mr. Dutton,' we told her.

"Thursday we drove up to the Fisk house, and daughter-in-law flew out to the curb and greeted us rapturously, trying in the cordial way of the West to make us strangers feel entirely at home. Greatly cheered, we tramped in—and were greeted by an absolutely strange woman who was just as startled as we were.

"'Isn't there some mistake?' I [illegible] 'Isn't this the P. C. Fisk home?'

"'It is the C. P. Fisk residence,' quavered the strange woman. 'Genevive told me the Misses Mayburn and Mr. Dutton—and I said it must be the Misses Duncan and Mr. Maywood—they're friends from San Francisco—and she said no, indeed, it was the other way and I thought the long-distance connection was poor and she had misunderstood.'

"'We must go at once,' I said heroically, because I could sniff the luncheon cooking and it was evidently a mighty good luncheon. 'We'll drive to the P. C. Fisks. How did I ever make such a mistake!'

"She was game, the agitated woman. She got out her car and took us to the P. C. Fisks' and we found the house boarded up and empty. Then she nearly wept because we wouldn't go back and eat her perfectly good luncheon that had been cooked for her San Francisco friends and was wasting on the desert air. But we were so feeble by this time that all we wanted to do was to slink back to Pasadena. We had a luncheon of malted milk in a drug store.

"That wasn't the sum total of our adventures. We went to Vancouver by boat and made friends with the Sacketts on board. We were due to visit the Dares, and the Sacketts were going to visit some relatives in the same locality. As the boat drew in I thought I saw Mr. Dare on the wharf, and waved and smiled at him for five minutes before I found he was a perfect stranger, who naturally seemed much interested in me.

"Ten minutes later he was being introduced to me by the delighted Sacketts, together with his wife. He was the Sacketts' relative—and his wife was plainly suspicious of me. But the real Mr. Dare bobbed up, thrust us into a cab, and, between shaking hands and looking at his watch, explained that he was due at a meeting, but that we were to go right out to the house, where Mrs. Dare was eagerly awaiting us.

"'You know where I live, don't you?' he asked the cabman when we dropped him at a corner. 'Dare's house? Sure,' said the cabman—and hurtled along to a perfectly gorgeous house set in splendid lawns, dumped us out, slammed our trunk and suitcases into the hall and drove off.

"An imperturbable Chinese servant opened the door and then left us seated in the hall, after we asked for Mrs. Dare. Some minutes later another Chinese servant slid by and stared at us. Several white-capped maids gazed at us from different doorways. And we sat in wonderful carved chairs, surrounded by marble statuary and bronzes, and shrunk and shrunk and wriggled and felt queerer and queerer, and whispered that we knew Henry Dare was doing well, but we had no idea he had succeeded financially so marvelously, and wondered if we had proper dinner gowns.

"Then a cool, composed trained nurse descended on us. She was perfect. She said Mrs. Dare was out for a drive, but would be so glad to see us, and would we go to our room and have tea sent up——"

"'She can't be out,' I told her, mechanically. 'Mr. Dare said he had 'phoned her that we were on our way to the house and she was awaiting us!'

"The trained nurse wrinkled her smooth brow and adopted a soothing tone. 'It's the first time,' she explained, 'that she has been driving since the baby came. It is three weeks old and a darling! I know she will be so annoyed at the way they treated your luggage and will have it attended to! Do let me order tea!'

"'Stop!' I said faintly. Sister was in a state of collapse against an unfeeling bronze. 'Mr. Dare is a joker—but he wouldn't go as far as that. Isn't this the Dare house?'

"'It is the Darr residence,' said the trained nurse.

"Then we picked ourselves up wearily and 'phoned for a cab, and got hot and cold for fear Mrs. Darr would return before we got out, and the trained nurse pathetically insisted on our having tea anyhow—and the Chinese servants got our luggage piled on the cab and we drove away.

"Then the cabman got lost—and once we passed a house where people were having tea on the veranda, and, behold, it was the Sacketts and the relative with whom I had scandalously flirted.

"'Don't bring them here!' called the relative's wife, who felt humorous, now that she had her husband safe. 'Don't bring them here! They tried to get my husband.'

"While we laughed feebly and hollowly we heard a great commotion half a block down. A woman leaning perilously over a veranda rail was shrieking: 'Bring them here! The luncheon is stone cold!' And it was Mrs. Dare."

* * *

Insulted Him.

The justice of the peace leaned toward the defendant.

"You are accused," he thundered, "of willfully striking and causing bodily harm to Mr. Brown, cinematograph operator of this town. What have you to say in your defense?"

The defendant, a grocer, drew himself up proudly.

"Your honor," he said, "the man insulted me."

"Insulted you? In what way?" demanded the magistrate.

The grocer blushed a ruddy hue.

"If you please, your honor," said he, "he came into my shop and asked if he could take a moving picture of the cheese!"

* * *

Suddenly, as It Were.

Landlady (sympathetically)—"Why, how did you fall downstairs, Mr. Lanks?"

Boarder (with dignity)—"Unexpectedly, ma'am."

Certain-teed
Roofing

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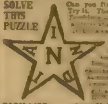

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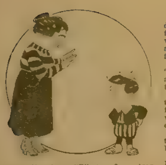


Mrs Nextdoor—"What a fine, strapping man your father is'"
Willie—"Strapping? Dat's his only fault'"

Advice to a Son.

"Son," says the hopeful father, "you, with every other lad in this great country, have an equal chance to grow up to be President. Let me, therefore, counsel you to cultivate your character so that you will be as truthful as Washington, as brave as Jackson, as sincere as Lincoln, as gallant as Roosevelt, and as sage as Wilson."

"You take a good commercial course, Eddie," suggests the fond mother. "By the time you grow up the Presidentess of this country will be as wise as Minerva, as influential as Cleopatra, as brave as Joan of Arc, and as bold as Carrie Nation." -Life.

The Troublesome One.

By name Bill Brown, he was a Londoner born and bred, but he sallied forth into the country in search of work. In due time he met a farmer and into his sympathetic ear poured forth his request for a job.

"All right," said the man of acres; "just round up those sheep and get 'em all into that fold. When you've done that I'll find you another job."

Two or three hours later a weary, tattered form presented itself at the farmer's door. It was the Londoner, wet with perspiration and weak from exhaustion

"You've been a mighty long time!" thundered the farmer. "What have you been doing?"

"You come and see, sir requested Bill Brown

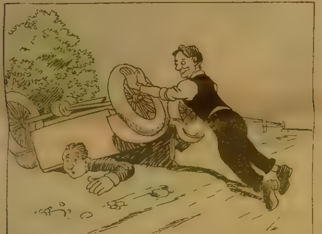
The farmer did as he was told and duly appeared at the fold. Looking over the high, close fence, he noticed a hare penned up among the sheep and asked the reason.

"What, that little 'un?" asked Bill. "Why, he's the beggar who gave me all the trouble."

Experienced.

"So," said the old General, "you think you would make a good valet for an old wreck like me, do you? I have a glass eye, a wooden leg, and a wax arm that need looking after, not to mention false teeth, and so forth."

"Oh, that's all right, General," replied the applicant, enthusiastically; "I've had lost of experience. I worked six years in the assembling department of a big motor-car factory."



Auto Agent (who has taken Jones for a "sample ride")—"Now, my dear fellow, in any other car but a Kalamazoo Light Roadster I couldn't do this! Note the ease with which I lift the chassis off you'"

Her Farewell Words.

He—"Then you are not interested in m[illegible] [illegible] but if the two syllables were transposed I'd not only be interested but enthusiastic"

Vicarious Honors.

"Was your garden a success last year?"

"Very much so. My neighbor's chickens took first prize at the poultry show."

Division of Work.

"Have you washed the dishes, dear?" he asked

"Yes," was the wife's reply

"Made the beds?"

"Sure thing."

"Fed all the birds?"

"All of 'em."

"Given the goldfish fresh water?"

"All done"

"Swept off the stoop?"

"Clean as a whistle But what have you been doing all morning, John?"

"Oh, I've been waitin' for you to come out and help me blow up the automobile tires!"

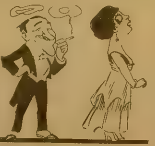
A Severe Jolt.

A budding poet of the town got a severe jolt from a critical friend the other day.

"Writing much verse now?" asked the critic.

"Not much," returned the poet. "Only enough to keep the wolf from the door.'

"Why, do you read it over to him?' asked the critic.



Mr. Hawkins—"My dear, do you know that you have one of the best voices in the world?"

Mrs. Hawkins—"Do you really think so?"

Mr. Hawkins—"I certainly do; otherwise it would have been worn out long ago!"

Not Up to Her Standard.

"Have you any references?" inquired the lady of the house

"Yis, mum, lots of thim," answered the prospective maid

"Then why did you not bring some of them with you'

"Well, mum, to tell the troot, they're just like me photygraphs None of thim don't do me justice."

Well Named.

"This collar stud is my own invention," said the Cheap Jack, "and the name I have given it is 'Fault.'"

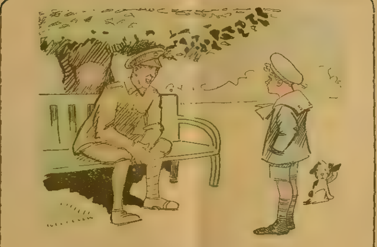
"Because everybody has faults?" suggested one of the crowd.

No, my dear sir; simply because it's so easy to find."

Some One's Blunder.

Centenarian "Well, I smoke and chew pretty regular I ain't never been to a doctor, and——

Specialist—"Never been to a doctor! There's a big mistake somewhere. You should have been dead forty years ago!"



Little Boy—"Didn't you get wounded at all?"
Soldier—"No, not at all."
Little Boy—"Not even a slight wound?"
Soldier—"Not even a scratch."
Little Boy—"Why, you might just as well stayed at home"

The Haughty Hired Man.

"I'll be mighty glad when my boy Josh gets back home," said Farmer Corntossel.

"You need him around the farm?"

"I should say so"

"Is he such a wonderful worker?"

"I wouldn't think of askin' Josh to work."

"Then why do you need him?"

"The hired man's puttin' on so much airs, there ain't hardly no livin' with him. Josh is the only person that ever come around here that kin beat him playin' checkers."

HOW SINGULAR!

Mrs. Jones had a singular boy,
So singular was this young Jone
That he never made more than one noi,
And he played his duets all alone.
At school he was rather erratic,
For, tho mentally quick as a weasel,
He would study but one mathematic,
And when sick he had only one measel.

Defining Parents.

Little Alfred was asked to write a composition on parents, and wrote this:

"Parents are things which boys have to look after them. Most girls have parents. Parents consist of pas and mas Pas talk a good deal about what they are going to do, but it's mostly the mas that make you mind"

The Height of Conceit.

Hokus—"Flubdub seems to have a wonderful opinion of his knowledge."

Pokus—"I should say he has. Why, I have actually heard him attempt to argue with his son, who is in his freshman year at college."

Hoping for Best.

"Was that you shoveling snow off the sidewalk at 6 o'clock this morning?"

"Yes," replied the sarcastic neighbor, "I hope I didn't wake you up."

"But you did."

"Well, then, I hope you felt resentful enough to get out in the morning and shovel the snow off your sidewalk."

Mean.

There goes a man after my own heart," said she.

"That's all right," he retorted. "He's in no danger so long as he keeps on in the direction he's going."

Slow.

Edith—"Miss Oldgirl says she has just reached the marriageable age."

Marie—"You don't say! I wonder what delayed her?"

Reassuring Mother.

Edmond had just begun to attend the public school, and had found a new friend, a child of whom Edmund's mother had never heard

"Who is this Walter?' she asked. "Is he a nice little boy?"

"Yes, ma'am, he is!" replied Edmund, enthusiastically.

"Does he say any naughty words?" pursued his mother.

"No," replied Edmund, with emphasis, "and I'm not going to teach him any!"

Forehanded.

Beater—"Beg pardon, sir, but at the last shoot you peppered my leg with a shot!"

Sportsman—"Well, I know that. And didn't I compensate you—pay you handsomely?"

Beater—"Certainly, sir; thank you kindly. But there's to be another shoot on Tuesday, and I thought perhaps—a little on account would be very convenient."

Clever.

The famous detective gasped as he arrived at the scene of the crime.

"Heavens," said he, as he looked at the window thru which the thief had escaped, "this is more serious than I had expected! It's broken on both sides!"

A Witty Photographer.

The photographer was drying his plates in the warm sunlight.

"What are you doing there?" asked a friend.

"Oh," was the reply, "just airing my views"

Against Additional Expense.

Young Mrs. Green (to neighbor)—"I'm having such trouble keeping our food. I bought a real nice-looking refrigerator, but it doesn't seem to work at all.'

Neighbor—"Do you keep ice enough in it?"

Mrs. Green—"Ice? I hope you don't think, after spending all that money on a refrigerator we'd go to the additional expense of buying ice."

Overlooked It.

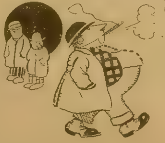
"What do you think of his nerve?" exclaimed the old man, who was notoriously tricky in business. "He called me a barefaced robber.'

"Oh, well," replied the man who knew him, "probably in his excitement he didn't notice your mustache."

Inevitable Seriousness.

"You must realize that it is time to talk seriously to your constituents"

"I suppose so," replied Senator Sorghum. "By this time they've heard about all the funny stories there are."



Blacker—"What is Jones, the lawyer, doing since his disbarment?"

Whyte—"He has a job as night watchman and is doing well. He robs an average of three burglars a week who break into their place."

Unmasculine.

Tommy had a profound contempt for the little boy next door, who threw a ball like a girl, seldom had on any but a clean shirt, and who generally wore gloves.

"Do you know why he's a sissy?" asked Tommy of his aunt. "It's 'cause he looks just like his mother, and that shows he's got girl blood in him'

A Regular Plotter.

"What makes you so anxious for Si Simlin to be a candidate for office? He never was such a great friend o' yours."

"I know it," replied Farmer Corntossel. "Si's been gettin' along altogether too quiet and easy. I want to see him trotted out an' put in line fur a lickin'."

Father Ought to Know.

"Dad, what do they call a man who eats only vegetables?"

"A vegetarian, son'

"And one who eats people?"

"A humanitarian. Now, run along and play."

A New Complaint.

A German, whose wife was ill at the Seney Hospital, Brooklyn, called the first evening she was there and inquired how she was getting along. He was told she was improving.

Next day he called again, and was told she was still improving This went on for some time, each day the report being that his wife was improving

Finally, one night when he called, he was told that his wife was dead Seeing the doctor, he went up to him and said, with a world of sarcasm in his voice

"Vell, doctor, vat did she die of -improvements?"

Independence.

Josh Juniper—"That feller, Aaron Allred, has got less pride than any young farmer I ever seen!"

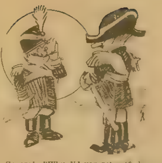
Si Wank—"How's that?

Josh Juniper—"Why, when he goes to town he don't walk his team most all the way an' then whip up an' come whirlin' over the top of the hill an' down into the village, a-snortin' an' a-sawin'; but just comes pokin' along into town like he didn't care a durn whether anybody was lookin' at him or not."

The First Line of Defense.

"Pa, what is the 'first line of defense'?"

"That depends on the circumstances, son. If this country were at war the first line of defense would be the navy. When a man's married, it's usually the telephone line by which he tries to square himself before he comes home."



General—"Why did you retreat? You had the other side outnumbered and technically defeated."

Captain—"I know, general, but a nest of hornets got into the game.

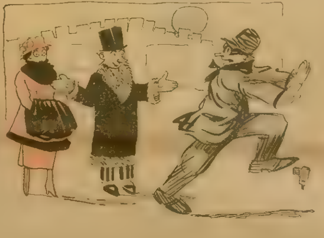
Helping Him.

An English beggar at a street corner was asking passers-by to "help the blind," when a man, to test him, gave him a smooth, bright piece of metal which needed close scrutiny to distinguish it from a sixpence, saying "Here is a sixpence, my man

A minute later he was touched on the shoulder, and turning round saw the beggar, who said

"Have you made a mistake? This is not a sixpence, sir

The other replied, "It is no mistake. I have helped you another way I have restored your sight."



Holdup—"Your money or your life'

Hubby 'My money, my dear sir, is in my wife's name and my wife is my life, so that, if you took her, you might get both and——"

Holdup—"Good evening'

Home of the Rubber Plant.

"Bacon -"I see Brooklyn, N. Y., botanical gardens will spend $200,000 on improvements."

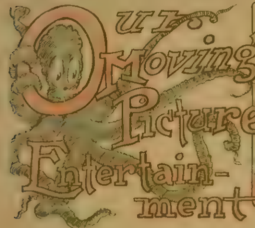
Egbert "Gee! Those rubber plants are expensive things, aren't th[illegible]

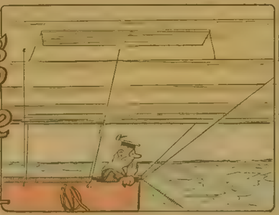
A Mere Precaution.

"So, Doctor, you are still single. Ah, I fear that you are somewhat of a woman hater

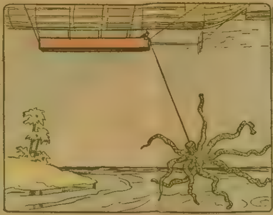
"Nay, madam; it is to avoid becoming one that I remain a bachelor"

LUKE LONGBOAT'S BIG HAUL

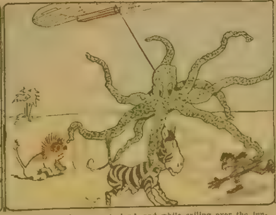




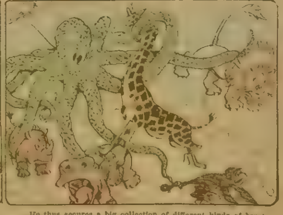
Luke Longboat, of the British navy, having been captured by the Germans, escapes in one of their airships, and while sailing across an arm of the ocean, feels a tug at the anchor rope which has been trailing in the water.



Putting on a little more speed, he finds that a huge octopus has become entangled in the anchor rope and cannot escape.



Presently he comes to land, and while sailing over the jungles and desert, the huge octopus grabs numerous specimens of the animal kingdom.



He thus secures a big collection of different kinds of beasts, and upon landing at home Luke makes a fortune by exhibiting his menagerie.

A Movie Detective

Or, The Press-Agented Gem

By Lloyd Thacher

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Begun in No. 2, January 8. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIII.

NEVER had the studio been the scene of such a tableau as now held the stage. Helen Hayden, white, beautiful, unconscious there on the floor; the tall detective standing straight, close to the spot where she lay; the director, aghast, his dramatic instinct drinking in the picture; Bray, excited, lacking the ability to move—and all surrounded by a background of gayly dressed, thrilled actors and actresses.

But the tableau quickly became animated. Ti Syde bent over and raised the woman from the floor, looked about, and carried her to a "prop" sofa nearby. Bray followed closely, roused from his temporary stupor. Some of the actresses hurried after, and soon Helen was the object of their ministrations. The men withdrew, leaving the women to care for the stricken girl.

"What does it all mean?" exclaimed Superintendent Bray, when he was alone with the detective. "You have recovered the gem?"

Ti nodded and smiled. "You'll know all about it in a little while," he replied. "Just now I want to ask you a question or two. How much is Miss Hayden receiving from this company?"

"What has that got to do with it?" exclaimed Bray. "Don't keep me in suspense. Did Grange steal the thing?"

"How much is Miss Hayden receiving?" repeated Ti.

The superintendent named a huge sum, but a sum smaller than the actress' press agent claimed as her salary.

"When does her contract expire?" continued Ti.

"This month," muttered Bray, disgusted at the questions.

"Thank you," and Ti started away toward the sofa where the actress, now quite herself, could be seen sitting, her hands to her head.

But before the detective reached the spot, Grant Grange intercepted him.

"I don't know on what you based your statement to Miss Hayden," he said, "but either she is out of her head, or else she is not the woman I believe her to be."

"She is not out of her head, Mr. Grange," said Ti.

"Then"—and the actor looked away as tho far back into the past before he continued, "then I—I beg of you do not humiliate her if she believes that I am guilty. I think a great deal of my reputation—but I would not save it at the expense of—of a woman whom I—whom I once thought I cared for."

Neither of the men had noticed a small figure that had glided up to the detective. The other actors and actresses seemed to respect their evident desire to speak apart, but now Ti felt the presence of a third person.

He turned and looked down on the curly black hair of the little "extra girl," Madge.

"If," said Ti very low, "if you do not want vindication yourself, how do you feel about your little friend here whose confidence in you was so great that she risked her whole future in the picture world by standing before a crowd of people and telling one of the great stars of the stage, when she accused you, that that star lied? Don't you believe that she deserves vindication?"

Grant Grange's face was turned now to the place where Madge stood, her head bent, her cheeks flushed from the memory of the seeming forward action she had taken.

"Don't—don't think of me," she whispered. "I'm glad I said it—no matter what happens."

"I had not thought," murmured Grant. "I had not thought of the little one—it seemed so natural that she should come to my defense. I've got in the habit of leaning on her, I guess." His hand, in the darkness of the corner in which they stood, reached out toward the black curls, and Ti, seeing, smiled and moved on toward Helen Hayden.

"May I have a word with you, Miss Hayden?" he said gently.

"You say you have the jewel," the girl almost hissed, and her eyes were not pleasant to look upon. "Give it to me, and let the horrible matter drop."

"How about the thief?" queried Ti. "Don't you want to see him sent to prison for a good long term?"

"I don't care what happens to him," retorted the girl. "Just now you told me that I would withdraw my charge against Grant Grange. He is the thief, but I'm glad to do as you ask in order to get over with this horrible affair."

"I don't ask you to withdraw the charge—it is nothing to me," and the detective's face was stern. "But it is a great deal to you, and I shall not give you the jewel for a little while."

"Why not? It's mine, isn't it?" snapped the woman.

"I suppose so." Now the detective drew close to her, and into her ears he spoke clear, incisive words. As he talked, the girl's face grew whiter underneath the powder; and fear, fear came to her eyes.

"It is nothing to me, Miss Hayden," he said, "what you do. Of course there will have to be an explanation, and Mr. Bray will have to know, as he employed me. My idea was to save you as much as possible, and for that reason I thought that we would have our little talk—you, Grant Grange, Mr. Bray, Blake, and I—privately. But I think that something is due Grant Grange, and the little girl, Madge, as they called her."

A convulsive shudder passed thru the form sitting on the sofa, and the woman's frown became bitter.

"What has she to do with it?" she muttered.

"Only that she dared to express her conviction," was Ti's serious reply, "and her conviction was based partially on the confidence I gave her. So that I fear you will have to set her straight before the people who heard her take her stand against you. She would be discredited in her world if you did not vindicate her. This is the least you can do."

"I'll die first."

"What do you care—what difference will it make to you? And remember," again Ti Syde brought all of the strength of his personality into his words, "that I understand everything connected with this case. I even understand you—with the information that Mr. Bray has given me."

The woman on the sofa did not move, and Syde watched her intently for a moment.

"Well," he said presently, with just a trace of impatience in his tone, "which is it to be? Shall I stand out there and tell the whole story, or will you do as I suggest—vindicate Madge, withdraw your charge against Grant Grange, and then allow us to go over the whole matter privately?"

"Give me the jewel," repeated Helen Hayden, much as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

"You know that is out of the question just yet."

Long she looked at the strong man in front of her. Then slowly she rose to her feet, resting a trembling hand on his arm. But almost instantly she withdrew from his support, and, cold and hard now, she followed him to the place where Bray was standing talking with the director, and with difficulty restraining his impatience to join the detective and his star.

"Mr. Bray," said Ti, as they approached, "Miss Hayden has a word to say before these people who heard her accuse Grant Grange of stealing her jewel. Am I right, Miss Hayden?"

The handsome woman bowed her head in acquiescence, and Ti looked about to see where little Madge had hidden herself. He spied her far back from the others, lost in the shadows of the studio.

But Ti was standing directly beneath the lights which no one had seemed to remember to shut off, and it was evident that the girl caught the summons of his eyes, for she moved forward, and in a moment was at the detective's side.

"I find," began Miss Hayden, defiance flashing now from her eyes, "I find that Mr. Syde has recovered my jewel. I withdraw my charge against Mr. Grange."

She turned to go, but one look from Ti halted her. She stood uneasily, questioning him silently as much as she would allow herself to wait the commands of any man.

"Do you think that is a vindication." The unspoken words were as plain to the actress as tho the detective had shouted them from the housetops. The woman opened her lips again. He was remorseless, this big, domineering man.

"And I would add," she went on, "that Mr. Grange had nothing to do with the loss of the jewel. He knows nothing of the theft."

Again she moved forward, but her eyes were again drawn irresistibly by the detective's, and she watched them as they looked from her to the slight figure of little Madge standing beside him.

Again came the look of defiance to the countenance of the actress, and again she started forward. But that strange something which had influenced her to give Grant a complete vindication, held her back. She glanced down at the little actress, and, suddenly, the flood gates of her heart seemed to open. She became human, the chains of deception, hate, and artificiality falling from her for the moment, and her words rushed forth.

"And little Madge was right!" she cried. "I did lie. I knew that Grant Grange was not the thief. Think as well of me as you can—I was crazy—but believe in her and in the purity and truth of such as she!"

Helen Hayden, known to millions by the beauty of her face and form, the wonder of her acting, darted from the studio and up the stairs leading to her dressing-room, while those whom she had left turned to each other in wonder, and for a moment silence held the room.

The voice of the director brought a sense of relief to break the tense situation. "Well, people," he said in a matter-of-fact tone, "we'll call everything off for to-day. Be here tomorrow at nine o'clock in the same make-up."

"And, ladies and gentlemen," interposed Superintendent Bray, "I beg of you not to mention anything that has taken place here today. I think that we have had enough of publicity."

Slowly, talking excitedly among themselves, the "extra" people left the studio, and it was many a long day before the happenings of that morning lost its interest to them.

One man, a stranger in the studio, stood motionless as he watched the actors depart. Presently he roused himself and spoke to one passing near him.

"Where is Miss Hayden's dressing-room?" he asked in a hushed whisper.

"Up those stairs around that corner," replied the man.

Slowly the inquirer moved in the direction of the stairway, then up it and along the hall of the floor above. Almost in front of him he saw a closed door bearing the name "Miss Hayden." Here he stopped, hesitated a moment, then, with faltering hand, knocked.

A faint voice came to him. "Who is it?"

"Al," came from the seeker for admission.

"Come in, boy," replied Miss Hayden's voice. And her friend, the newspaper man who had expected to startle the countless movie fans of the city with a brilliant story in his paper, opened the door and entered to find Miss Hayden, proud actress of fame, standing alone in the center of her room.

"You'll tell me all about it?" he asked humbly.

"You'll hear it all probably," replied the woman, in a hard voice, "and then perhaps even you will want to have nothing more to do with me."

"Nothing can make any difference with me," was the man's firm reply. "And I believe that if I have you—if

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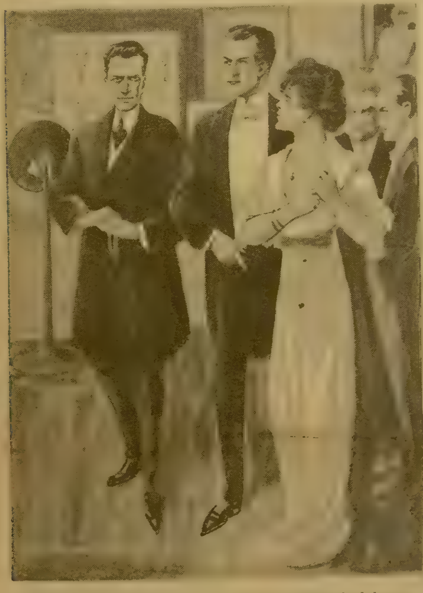
there is anything that I can do to help you—I believe that my life will be different."

The woman laughed harshly, then sank to a chair. "We will have to wait and see what happens—just what horrible thing that detective has in store for me yet. He'll be coming here pretty soon to end things. Then we shall see. Oh," and her voice was that of an old, world-wearied woman, "I'm sick of it all.

Downstairs Ti Syde was speaking to Superintendent Bray. "If you don't mind, Mr. Bray," said the detective, "I'd like to have you get Miss Hayden to receive us. There is no need to prolong this matter, and I'll attend to the others I want to have present. Her room is large enough for us all, I think."



There was something yet to be said by this wonderful man.

"But the jewel," exclaimed Bray.

"I have it still." Ti smiled back at him.

"And I'm simply crazy to know all about the thing," returned Bray "Don't keep us waiting long."

Grant Grange and Madge were just beyond the wings of the scene. They knew that there was something yet to be said by this wonderful man who had so changed their lives, and they were ready for his call. Now Ti approached them and asked them to accompany Bray to Miss Hayden's room.

"She won't want to have me there," murmured Madge.

"But I shall, and it's only right that you hear everything," said Grant. He looked down at the trusting girl by his side, and for the first time in his life he saw her as she was—a true, wonderful woman, beautified by the woman's love that filled her whole being.

They moved together toward the stairs. Again Ti smiled and passed on toward the little platform where the three men still waited.

"You need not wait any longer, Dick and Ed," said the detective to his assistants Then, to Blake: "If you do as I ask, and answer questions I ask you before the others who will be in the room, I can promise that you will get on very well."

"I suppose you're planning on about five years for me," growled Blake, alias Gardner, or vice versa.

"Five years less about four years and eight months," returned the detective.

The prisoner turned quickly and looked wonderingly at this man whose every move was a surprise

"Quit your joshing," he said. "Sh[illegible] mad clear thru, and will want to give me all the law allows. But what are you going to do with him? You'll have some trouble proving anything on me if you don't give him all that's coming to him, too."

"You know better than that," returned Syde. "But come with me, and I'll guarantee that you will enjoy yourself—a lot more than some of the others who will be in our party."

"And you don't mean that [illegible]ou'll see that I get off with four mont[illegible] asked Gardner, incredulously.

"I am not in the habit of saying things I don't mean," replied Ti. "But you must tell everything I want you to, and make no fuss about it"

"I'll spill the whole beans to get off with four months," was the retort. "But I would like a drink."

He was quite sober now, but the craving was there.

Up the stairs they passed and to the door of Miss Hayden's dressing-room. A knock brought the word of admission, and Blake and Ti entered to face the five persons in the room who waited, all ignorant of the story he was to unfold, all eager with anticipation.

CHAPTER XIV.

ALL eyes were turned upon Ti Syde and his companion, Blake, as they entered the room. The latter, now clean-shaven, was a stranger to them, and they wondered why he was brought into this intimate conference.

"I believe," began Ti, seating himself in one of the extra chairs that Bray had ordered brought into the room for the occasion, 'I believe that every one here will agree with me that what is said in this room should be kept quiet—for the sake of—well, you will understand when we have finished. It is quite necessary that all should know the facts, however. As to Mr. Blake, whom I now introduce, he will say nothing I am sure, and I now have the pleasure of arresting him for petit larceny."

"Blake, the 'extra' man!" gasped Bray

"You may call him Gardner if you prefer," said Ti.

A faint exclamation came from Madge, and Superintendent Bray rose, facing the detective.

"He stole Miss Hayden's jewel?" he cried.

"Yes, Mr Bray"

"And you arrest him for petit lar[illegible]" fairly shrieked the other

[illegible] Yes, Mr. Bray," and Ti Syde [illegible]dulged in a smil[illegible]

Helen Hayden's face was a study. Quick she was mentally, and now she knew that there was no angle of the situation that this detective had failed to grasp. But how had he learned of [illegible]

"I [illegible] add," remarked the de[illegible] [illegible] that Blake took the jewel [illegible]om the coat-tail pocket of Grant Grange's coat—the one he wore for the picture yesterday—the one he is wearing now

Grange jumped to his feet, anger stamped on his expressive face.

"Am I to be compelled to listen to one accusation after another?" he said quickly. "First you defend me, Mr. Syde, then you accuse me. Am I mad, or are you, sir?"

"You must pardon the tactless way in which I sprung the news on you, returned Ti. "I might add that you had no idea that the gem was in your pocket. There is but one person who suspected that fact, and he acted upon it. Perhaps it would be well for him to speak and tell us what he did yesterday afternoon. From the look of his face, I judge that he is not very unhappy over his arrest. I take great pleasure in introducing Mr. Blake, or Gardner, who will, I am sure, give us an interesting tale."

And it was true that Blake looked anything but unhappy over the turn of affairs. He glanced at Ti, and, for the first time in many hours, a grin spread over his face.

"I don't know what he is driving at," he began, "but I bet Ti Syde don't lie to a fellow, and I'm going to take his word. I don't mind doing my bit for petit larceny, and I'll tell what I saw and what I did. I don't know how he is going to work it out, but if he sends me up for anything more than a few months—or, yes, I could stand a year—I'll," and the grin left his face being replaced by a frown of determination, "I'll see that things end for him just as soon as I get out."

"You may go on," said Ti, quietly.

"Petit larceny," muttered Superintendent Bray.

"I had my eye on Helen Hayden's jewel," continued Blake. "I don't mind telling you that. I watched her yesterday when she and Grant Grange left the studio and came up here. I followed Mr. Bray and his friend, first of all, and heard them telling how much the gem was worth, and it got me. When Miss Hayden and Mr. Grange started up the stairs I was hiding, watching them—every move they made."

Little Madge leaned forward and looked intently at the man.

"And I didn't see him," she whispered to Grant, who was sitting at her side.

"When they got to the bottom of the stairs," Blake went on, "Miss Hayden stepped back and Grange went ahead. The tail of his coat caught on the stairs. Then I saw, and I could hardly believe my eyes, I saw Miss Hayden pull the jewel from the chain that held it about her throat, and, in helping Grange with his coat—his back was turned to her—she slipped her hand underneath the coat-tail. I couldn't be sure, but I didn't see that her hand was closed when she withdrew it, and I didn't see how she could still have the jewel. And she kept her other hand at her throat after that so I couldn't be sure that what I had seen was right—and I couldn't believe it."

"You're doing splendidly," interposed Ti. "You are not leaving me anything to explain."

"So," the man continued, "when I got to the top of the stairs and saw Miss Hayden come into the room, I was puzzled. Either she had the jewel, or else it was in Grange's pocket."

Involuntarily every one in the room turned to see how the woman was taking these disclosures, but, perfect actress that she was, no one obtained

(Continued on Page Seventeen.)

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A Movie Detective.

(Continued From Page Fifteen.)

any satisfaction. She sat rigid, her eyes glassy.

"And pretty soon, after Grange had talked with her in her doorway," Blake continued, "Miss Hayden came out and went into Mr. Smithers' office. I took a chance and ran in here. The jewel wasn't in sight, and I knew I wouldn't have time to make a good search. So I beat it and went downstairs and changed my clothes. I'd played the part of a policeman the day before, and had taken the uniform home—to tell the truth I thought that I might need it. I put the thing on, thinking that I might some way get into Mr. Grange's dressing-room, if I had that suit on. I knew no one would recognize me, as I hadn't ever been seen here without whiskers on my face."

The man looked about him. He appeared to be proud of the interest he was arousing, and was having the time of his life. All the time he was conscious of the tremendous relief he felt over the fact that he was in no danger of having to serve a long prison term—the thing he had feared.

"So I put the uniform on, and came back here with no definite plan in my mind," Blake returned to the story. "But the moment I got inside the studio I heard about the theft of the jewel, and how Miss Hayden had announced that it was gone. What her game was I didn't know or care. It was a cinch for me then, for I knew that, if Grange hadn't discovered the jewel in his pocket, it was still there, and my plan was all ready made for me. I just went and searched his clothes, found the jewel and beat it. That's all I have to tell. Mr. Syde knows the rest, and he'll give it to you. But I'd like to hear him say again 'petit larceny.'"

A sigh of amazement was audible as the man finished and sat back. Now no one looked at Helen Hayden, and she seemed oblivious to her surroundings.

"Petit larceny," said Ti, smiling.

"But explain," cried Bray. "You're torturing us. I just can't believe this man's story."

"It is true," came from Helen Hayden. "I knew that my contract was about to expire. I was crazy—money crazy. I wanted the advertising—I wanted to hold you people up for the greatest salary ever paid an actress, and I knew I could do it this way. There is more to tell, however. Oh—" and for the first time since the man Blake had begun to speak, she showed signs of becoming once more a woman—a flesh and blood woman with the emotions, the possibilities for anguish a woman's heart holds.

And the man at her side, gazing far into the distance, hearing her words, took from his pocket the copy paper on which he had written the story of the events of that morning, and, abstractedly, began to tear into fine bits the tale of excitement there told. But involuntarily he moved closer to the woman he loved in spite of everything, and Helen Hayden did not draw away from him.

"There is no necessity," said Ti, nor was there anything of boastfulness in his tone, "for my going into detail as to my part in this matter. It is enough to say that I found the thing in the taxi where Blake had placed it, thinking that it would be safer there, fearing the possibility of a search or something of the sort. I have it here." Now he took out the little hard object he had found and placed it on a table in the center of the room. "I would like to have it left there for a few minutes, for the tale is not quite told."

"Petit larceny," again muttered Superintendent Bray. "I tell you, Ti Syde," he added, turning a determined face to the great detective, "I don't care what clemency you have promised the thief, I'll not stand to see him get off as lightly as that. I'll prosecute him to the full extent of the law."

Again Ti smiled, just as Grant Grange spoke.

"If I had not heard it from Miss Hayden's own lips," he said, "I would not believe that she intended to do me this horrible wrong."

"Oh, don't think," cried Helen, tears now sparkling in her eyes, "don't think that I intended to have you arrested! My plan wasn't very well formed, but I didn't intend to have you suffer. I intended to let the papers get the story, and then, before you had ever discovered it in your coat, I was going to give out a statement that it had been found, and that I had felt sorry for the thief and let him go. I didn't think that you would ever notice a little thing like that in the pocket of your coat. And I knew that you would forgive me for having hidden it there."

"But——" interrupted the man.

"But when you said what you did this morning—about something that was in the past," she hesitated and glanced distractedly at the newspaper man at her side, "I just lost my head. The dramatic instinct in me crowded everything else out. I had planned—I had a reporter here—I had planned to make the declaration that I had found the jewel and had freed the thief—this morning. But my fear, or anger—something—spoke thru my lips, and hating you, Grant Grange, for as I thought, threatening me, I accused you of the theft. Would to Heaven that I had died first!"

Tears, real, human, burning tears gushed from her eyes. There was no acting now, and not a heart in the room but felt for this suffering woman. Eyes were turned away, and only the sobs of the great actress could be heard.

From her place beside Grant Grange stole a small figure. Shyly she moved toward the star, and then, before those many curious eyes, little Madge knelt at the other's side, and her hands crept about Helen's neck.

"Don't cry, Miss Hayden," she whispered. "There isn't any one of us that hasn't made awful mistakes. And—and I'm sorry that I used to hate you. I—I just love you for being like you are now and telling us all about it."

One duty remained for Ti Syde to perform and he did not relish adding to the unhappiness of the weeping woman before him. His fertile brain sought some way to relieve the situation and to kill time while his subconscious mind worked over his problem, he spoke again.

"It might interest you all to know," he said, "that Mr. Blake here was a member of a society for the abstracting of property from others in a painless manner. As it happened, the gentlemen who composed that society are at present free from indebtedness to the law, and were not mixed up in this matter. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing some of them this evening and telling them——" He stopped suddenly. "No," he went on slowly. "I fear I shall have to disappoint them. I feel that what has transpired here should go no further, except as is necessary for the law's satisfaction. But I might ask Mr. Blake, who has been so truthful, if his chauffeur had anything to do with the theft."

"Do you think," retorted Blake, "that I would leave that jewel in his taxi if he knew it was there? How long do you suppose he would have waited for me? He would have beaten it as fast as he could the minute I left him."

"I had come to that conclusion myself," returned Ti. "And even if you are not telling me the truth, I don't think that it would be worth while bothering with him in a small matter of this kind."

"Small matter!" cried Superintendent Bray. "I'm tired of all this. You seem to treat the whole matter as a joke, when it was as grave a theft as has been pulled off in years."

"I have returned the jewel, have I not?" queried Ti Syde, a quizzical smile on his face.

"You have, sir," growled Bray. "But I want the criminal punished."

Suddenly Ti looked toward Miss Hayden. She had ceased weeping now, and her hands held those of Madge. She seemed to obtain comfort from the close proximity of the sweet young girl.

The detective's eyes twinkled as he looked. He had found a way to lighten the severity of his final announcement, and at the same time bring wonder, momentary tho it should be, to the brains of those assembled in the room. If only Helen Hayden's sense of humor had not deserted her! If only she could forget for a moment the position she was in! Perhaps what he was about to say would help her to forget.

"Miss Hayden," said Ti, taking the little jewel from the table where it had lain all this time, "this has been a remarkable case—extremely interesting from a psychological point of view."

Could it be possible that the twinkle of the detective's eyes was contagious enough to affect the great actress? Could it be possible that she, a moment ago broken and hopeless, was now ready to play up to the situation Ti was about to create?

"And I am very full of sentiment," the detective went on. "I would give a great deal to have something—some little token to remind me of the drama of the press-agented gem. Might I beg that you would suggest something that you would give me. I don't want anything of value—just some worthless little reminder."

Even Helen Hayden's rivals were obliged to confess that she was remarkably quick mentally—no ax was needed to help her to catch the point to a story or suggestion.

For just a moment she stood looking at the detective intently; then to her glorious eyes came the look of gracious

(Continued on Page Twenty-two)

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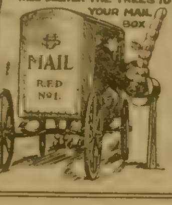
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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Half a lie is no better than a whole one.

A wasted opportunity comes home to roost.

Death is as certain as marriage is uncertain.

Many a large idea originates in a small head.

Other people's troubles bore us more than our own.

One may be as good as the next—in a barber shop.

A fool and his money make a noise like a good thing.

Air castles are built on a foundation of impossibilities.

It sometimes happens that a man is married to his boss.

He who never does wrong never does very much, anyway.

Suffering has no charms for one who must suffer in silence.

Music isn't necessarily broken because it comes in pieces.

People who do things can afford to let others do the talking.

But it doesn't take a blunt person long to come to the point.

It's enough to make a wife frown, if her husband "smiles" too often.

The devil doesn't expect to be invited into the parlor the first time.

However, the less a man talks, the more he doesn't have to apologize.

Isn't it queer that a man never shows his temper until after he loses it?

A woman's happiness is never complete unless some other woman envies her.

There is a difference between keeping boarders and having boarders keep you.

Anyway, the pen has the sword beaten to a frazzle for long-distance fighting.

A man thinks he has many sins of omission and but very few of commission.

Only a very wise man can write a letter to a woman that doesn't mean anything.

If the wife would practice all her husband preaches there would be fewer grounds for divorce.

There is at least one thing women can do that men can't—and that is say "good-by" gracefully.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Tulle is the best material for informal dinner dresses.

Velvet and velveteen will be worn a great deal for evening.

Flesh pink lining for the sheer upstanding collars is a good idea.

There are some suits with coats cut to hang straight from the shoulders.

Fur tippets and high crowned directoire hats are much to the fore this winter.

One of the unusual new stocks is made with the outside cut deep enough to turn down quite on the shoulders. It could be made of batiste or linen, silk, or any material approved, so it is kept soft. The turnover part naturally turns away at the throat from the stock proper and it wrinkles a bit, which is part of its charm.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Crocheted articles of wool can be successfully cleaned by keeping them in a pillowcase during the entire process of washing. Plenty of warm water and soap must be used, abundance of warm rinsing water, and the pillowcase, with contents still untied, hung on the line on a bright, windy day.

Gasoline is the best agent for cleaning whole garments. You are sure to be successful if you use a sufficient quantity of the fluid. A little white soap may be used on badly soiled places. Rinse a whole garment in the clear fluid and hang in the shade without wringing. Be very careful when using the gasoline, as it is inflammable. To avoid an accident you had better do your cleaning out of doors.

Almost all housewives know how very hard it is to crack pecan nuts. Pour boiling water over the nuts and allow them to stand tightly covered for five or six hours. The nut meats may then be extracted easily without a trace of the bitter lining of the nut. Use nut crackers and crack lightly all around the nuts. The work is quickly done and is not at all like the old tedious process of picking out the meats from the dry nuts. The meats nearly alway come out whole.

NEEDLEWORK.

The new card table covers are white linen, hemstitched, with darned net squares inserted in two opposite corners. One of these squares has the owner's initials in it, and the other has a heart for the first table, heart and spade for the second and so on, to designate the table number. These squares are inserted by means of the buttonhole stitch.

Silk is a nasty thing with which to embroider, but the needlewoman is rewarded by the results, at any rate. Some of the trouble is lessened in the new work by using one shade of each color. The effect is very unusual. One of the latest luncheon sets is worked in bright yellow silk. When this set is used the only table decoration is a low bowl of violets or purple pansies.

A pretty gift for the engaged girl who is busily stitching on her trousseau is a set of trousseau bands, as they are called. They are the girl's favorite color in ribbon and are shirred for a goodly distance of their length, leaving plain ribbon ends to be tied in a fetching bow about a pile of snowy nightgowns, chemises, or petticoats. Plain ribbon can be embroidered in silk to designate its particular purpose, and an elaborate set of ribbons will include enough to bind the best sheets, pillow cases, napkins, tablecloths, towels and face cloths. Surely this is a welcome suggestion for the next linen shower.

CONCERNING COURTSHIP.

Tenderness and affection are as much appreciated by men as by the fair sex. Yet, knowing this, many girls cruelly permit their admirers to hunger for appreciation, as far as any expression of their love is concerned. This is a serious hamper to the progress of courtship. It pleases a man to see a woman he loves gentle and considerate in her home life. He may appear to be a trifle jealous of the duties that absorb some of the time which might be devoted to himself. Yet in his heart he would not have her one iota less loving to her own people.

A certain maidenly dignity always pleases a man. Underneath the girlish love of jollity and pleasure he delights to know there is a sturdy sense of justice that will respect his rights as well as her own.

It pleases a man to find the woman he loves companionable and able to take an interest in the things that interest him—to meet a smiling face on which frowns are rarely seen, and a pair of bright eyes that grow brighter as they seek his own.

HEALTH NOTES.

When will women learn there is no royal road to beauty? It takes more than facial soaps or ointments or powders to make a good complexion. Regular habits, plenty of sleep, exercise and fresh air, plain, nourishing food, with all organs functioning properly, producing good blood, are the common sense ways to insure a good complexion.

Turn children loose—that is the best way to develop the muscles of boys and girls. Turn them loose and let them live wild—climb trees, jump fences, chase squirrels, play with the dogs, dig in the garden, pick flowers, hop, skip and jump, and do all sorts of things that a natural human animal wants to do. The trouble is our boys and girls are tamed too much. We are all born wild, and in the civilizing process have to be tamed more or less. Most of us, however, get tamed too much. We become so tame that we are spoiled.

RECIPE.

SOUR CREAM COOKIES—One-half cup butter, three-quarters cup sugar, one-half cup of sour cream, flour about two cups, one half teaspoon soda, one teaspoon cinnamon, one-half teaspoon vanilla, one egg. Cream butter; add one-half cup sugar; add beaten egg, sour cream, soda and flavorings. Add one cup flour and add more gradually until mixture is thick enough to roll. Sometimes it takes a full cup and sometimes a little less. Put mixture in icebox or cool place until cold. Less flour will then be needed on the board. Use the remaining one-quarter cup sugar for sprinkling over the cookies before they are put in the oven.

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Captain Kidd's Treasure

Or, The Mystery of Shelter Cove

By Capt. Jack Judson

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CHAPTER VII.

AFTER a brief chase of the man who had stolen the diagram supposed to lead to the hiding-place of Captain Kidd's treasure, Dick returned disconsolate to the house.

"He got away, but he's winged," said he to Rodney's interrogative look. "But I certainly winged him, as I could tell by his gait. He got the diagram all right——"

"It's too bad! Just when we were beginning to decipher it, too. He was well masked, I say."

"Yes, he had prepared for the theft. I would like to have got a peep at his face."

"Maybe you would have recognized your friend, Mr. Murdock, the detective."

"I hardly think so," answered Dick. "In the first place the thief was taller than Mr. Murdock. Well, the fellow will have to hunt up a doctor, for he was pretty well spattered with shot. I would have given him a second barrel if he hadn't zigzagged so among the trees."

It was a sad loss for the young treasure hunters and they resolved to keep it to themselves.

"It doesn't discourage me," said Dick. "I'm not going to give up the hunt till it finally ends."

The next day it was reported in Bloomfield that thieves had been busy the night before and several people said that some few common things had disappeared.

As Dick passed down the street he noticed a sign tacked to the constable's door.

"Constable Shavers is out of town. Will not be back for a few days."

Dick read the notice twice and then went on.

"Out of town, eh?" he soliloquized. "Maybe something happened last night to take him out of town," and a smile gathered at the boy's lips.

A few yards farther on was Doctor Knoop's office, with the genial physician standing in the doorway.

"I have just noticed," said Dick, pausing in front of the doctor, "that we have no constable. Important business must have taken Noll out of town."

"No doubt," answered the doctor, cautiously.

"I wonder if he was injured last night?" Dick continued.

"Why should he be?" was the retort. "He's a pretty careful official."

"I know. Maybe he has found a clew to the crime of Shelter Cove," suggested young Spencer, narrowly watching the doctor.

Doctor Knoop smiled.

"They tell me that you are one of the searchers for Captain Kidd's treasure," he suddenly said. "You haven't found it yet?"

"Not yet," and Dick laughed. "Some think it is nothing but a will-o'-the-wisp, but I think there's a good deal in it."

"There may be, Dick, but since everybody on the Island is looking for it, it is pretty certain that all can't find it."

At that moment the youth happened to notice several dark spots on the stones at his feet. He was certain they were spots of blood recently spilled. Without calling attention to the stains, Dick moved on, but with his gaze centered on the paving stones at his feet.

"Ho! What's this?" he suddenly ejaculated, as the trail stopped at the gutter, but was continued in the street. Dick followed like a young Indian.

Not far up the opposite sidewalk it again crossed, and at last, to his amazement, he was led to the very door of Constable Shavers' office. Light was beginning to break in upon the young treasure hunter.

Doctor Knoop had recently dressed a wound for some one and the blood drops led to Noll Shavers' sanctum.

"I'm not at all surprised," thought the boy. "The constable was wounded last night, and Doc Knoop dressed his hurts. I told Rodney that Murdock wasn't the thief, and I think I know who carried off the plan."

The little vacant lot behind the office was full of weeds, which went down noiselessly beneath Dick's feet when he invaded it. A shutter in the rear of the office was closed. Creeping forward, the youth found a crack in the shutter and immediately put an eye to it. The inside of the building was full of light, which came in over the transom. Dick's eye was soon taking in the little room.

In one corner of the office lay the doubled-up figure of a man—the outlines of which told Dick it was Noll Shavers. Then the notice of his absence was a lie, put up to deceive some one.

"He got the duck shot in his back," smiled Dick, as he contemplated the scene with a good deal of satisfaction. "It's his intention to keep under cover a few days, or until he is able to be out again. Sharp fellow, Mr. Shavers, but we'll see if there are not others a little sharper."

With this he withdrew and went back to the street. To his surprise he nearly collided with Murdock the detective.

"Taking a morning stroll, eh, Mr Murdock?" smiled Dick as they met.

"Just a little exercise to loosen my joints," was the detective's reply. "I've just come from Benham's store. They don't seem to be much interested in astronomy in Bloomfield."

"They're interested in nothing here but Captain Kidd's treasure."

"I've found that out already. Old Benham wanted to know if the stars could tell him what Kidd did with his gold."

"And what did the constable want to know?" queried Dick.

"He wasn't there. I heard he has left town for a few days—gone off on important business."

"Look here, Mr. Murdock," said Dick, in confidential tones, "if you will go behind the constable's office and peep thru the shutter, you might be rid of that idea."

Detective Murdock started slightly. "You don't mean to tell me that he's playing a game? Why, there's the notice of absence on his door."

"And it lies like a pirate," exclaimed Dick. "Noll Shavers is at home good enough."

Dick then began to wonder if he had best tell Murdock all about the events of the past night, and finally concluded to do so.

"You'd make a good detective," said the sleuth, at the conclusion of the narrative. "It was Shavers whom you shot. There's no doubt of it. I was going back to the city today, but this changes my plans. We'll know more about Mr. Shavers' business at home."

An hour later Dick made his appearance at Benham's store and bought some sugar.

"Robbers in town last night," said Jonas Benham, as he flicked the ashes from his stogie.

"So I've just heard."

"We'll be bothered a good deal with these city rascals later on. They think they can come to Bloomfield and rob with impunity. I'm going to have Bosty sleep in the store from now on. He'll be armed, too, and woe to the burglar who tries to break in."

Dick made no reply to these remarks, but started toward the door with his purchase. He had not reached it when something whizzed past his head and struck the door with a tremendous thud. It was a three-pound iron weight.

Dick whirled instantly and caught sight of Bosty's head as it was ducked below the counter. The vicious act set every nerve a-tingle, and dropping his sugar, he sprang behind the counter and bounded toward a crouched figure at the scales.

"You mean, miserable whelp!" he cried at the top of his voice. "You'd kill me, would you?" and the next second he was upon the cowardly Bosty, whom he was pummeling with all his might.

Jonas Benham rushed to his clerk's assistance with a loud cry.

"Here, don't harm my clerk!" he shouted, but Dick left off for an instant and caught up a sack of salt which he hurled with such precision that it landed in the grocer's face and sent him backward.

Once more Dick went at his antagonist. It was a fight to the finish, for at the close of it the new clerk sported a pair of black eyes which would obstruct his vision for a few days.

"He wanted the weight to kill me," said Dick, as he rose and picked up his sugar. "No one but a coward fights that way."

As he reached the open door, Jonas Benham caught him by the shoulder.

"I advise you to leave town as soon as possible," he flashed at Dick. "If you don't, we'll have you behind the bars inside of twenty-four hours. Bloomfield isn't going to be disgraced by kids of your sort."

"I'll go when I'm ready, but you may as well understand first as last that I'm not going away till I discover who killed Danny Bimm. You can smoke that in your pipe, Jonas Benham," and Dick was on the sidewalk with a twinkle in his eyes.

CHAPTER VIII

HAVING satisfied himself that Noll Shavers was the masked man who robbed him of the plan found in the peddler's pack, Dick began to cast about for its recovery. The fact that he had tracked the constable to his office by blood stains on the pavement confirmed his more than suspicion, and his last adventure in Benham's store told him that there was a conspiracy against him for the theft of the treasure plans.

He had not thought of leaving Bloomfield on account of Jonas Benham's threat. It only encouraged him to remain and fight it out with the conspirators, for the prize of the battle was Captain Kidd's treasure.

He was anxious to consult with Murdock, the detective, and the opportunity came later in the day. The detective was all smiles. He had investigated the constable's office, and had seen Mr. Shavers moving around with difficulty, showing that he was injured.

"You hit him good and hard," he said to Dick. "Why, the old rascal can hardly walk."

"I knew I hit some one," answered Dick. "The old duck gun rarely misses its mark, and I'm glad I punctured Shavers. Now, if he has kept the plan——"

"I don't think he has it," interrupted Mr Murdock.

"Who has it, then?"

"Jonas Benham. Shavers wouldn't be likely to keep such an important document in his condition."

Dick was startled.

"Then, if Benham has it we must get it from him!" he exclaimed.

"That's the idea," returned the detective. "And the sooner we get possession of it the better. I'll be at the store tonight——"

"To talk astronomy, Mr. Murdock?" interrupted Dick.

"Not this time."

"Are you going to put it up to Jonas Benham?"

"It depends," smiled Murdock. "Meanwhile we'll let Shavers growl over his hurts. It'll do him good, maybe."

When they separated, Dick went home and pulled himself together. Matters were getting desperate over Captain Kidd's treasure, and unless something desperate was done it would be lost forever.

During the day Mr. Murdock walked about the town, finally pulling up at the big oak where the dead body of Danny Bimm had been found. He carried a common walking stick, and with this he scattered the leaves and scrutinized the ground closely. This took him several hours, and then making a few notes in his notebook, he went slowly back to town.

On his way down street he dropped in at Doctor Knoop's office and was for-

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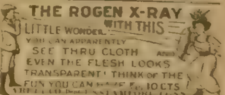

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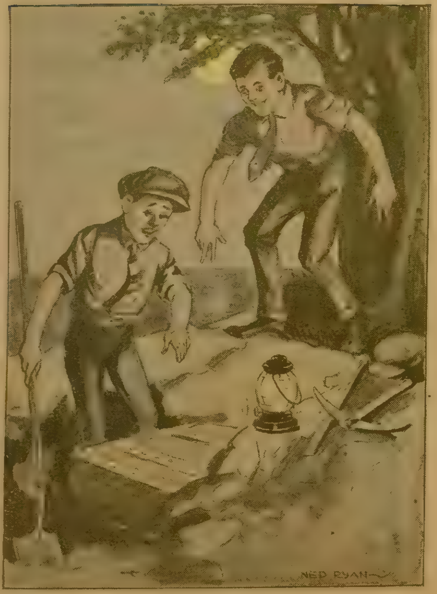

"It's Kidd's gold!" almost shouted Rodney.

tunate enough to find that gentleman at home.

"My name is Israel Murdock," said he, in calm tones. "I am a detective."

The physician nodded.

"Do you think Mr. Shavers is seriously hurt?"

Doctor Knoop assumed to look startled. "Mr. Shavers hurt?" he exclaimed.

"Yes—Constable Shavers. How many duck shot did you pick out of his back?"

The medical man turned his head away.

"Come, Doctor," continued Murdock, "this is a serious matter. Shavers was engaged in robbery when he was shot. He managed, however, to carry off a very important document."

"I wouldn't have thought that of the constable."

"Then you don't know him as well as I do. Noll Shavers came to Bloomfield from the city, and there is more than one charge against him on the police blotter. He's no angel by any means, Doctor. I'm going to see him."

There was no reply.

"He's not so bad but he can be seen?" the detective went on. "He's not dangerously hurt?"

"By no means."

"He wants to keep indoors till he is better and then come out, claiming that he has been called away on business."

"Possibly so," admitted Doctor Knoop.

"Thank you. Now please don't prepare Shavers for my visit," resumed the detective. "I won't be with him very long."

"What has he been doing that you want him?"

"A little robbery game, that's all. I shall not deprive Bloomfield of his presence; just want an interview, nothing more. Of course I'll find your patient at home?"

Ten minutes later Murdock withdrew and waited till nightfall.

A visit to the rear of the constable's office revealed to Mr. Murdock that his quarry was within, and he watched him closely for some time. There was a back door near the window, and presently Murdock knocked lightly. He heard a movement inside.

"Who's there?" asked a man's voice.

"Jonas," answered Murdock, and the following moment the door was opened, and Noll Shavers fell backward with a cry of rage on his lips.

"Don't be frightened," said Murdock, stepping inside and eying the astounded man with the orbs of an eagle. "I thought I would call and see how you were getting along. My name is Murdock."

Shavers was still staring at his visitor, too amazed to speak, and the sleuth continued:

"Did the shot penetrate very deep?" he suddenly asked, a smile coming into being at his lips. "The gun was fired at close range, I know——"

"What under the heavens are you talking about?" broke in the constable, as his face lit up with the fires of rage. "Who's been shot?"

"A gentleman of the name of Shavers, constable of Bloomfield."

"That's a pretty bold accusation," cried Noll. "Just wait a minute."

He turned and moved toward a desk, but a clicking sound brought him about, and he turned to see a revolver looking him in the face.

"Don't be obstreperous, Mr. Shavers," and the detective's voice was calm. "I'm here on business. You haven't forgotten the old Milford case?"

"But I served time for that," pleaded the white-faced man.

"And the little Burton matter?"

"I made good for that."

"I was just reminding you that you are no angel, Mr. Shavers. Now, if you please, I'll take the paper which you took from the two boys."

"I've got nothing that doesn't belong to me," was the reply.

"You're quite sure of that, eh?"

"You can have my oath on it, sir."

"But you took it?"

"I'll have to admit that, because from what I know of you, Mr. Murdock, you never make a mistake."

"What became of it?" and the detective leaned forward with the weapon within a few inches of the constable's nose.

Shavers' face grew pale, and his lips came together in a snap of determination.

"What became of it?" repeated the detective, in harder tones. "This is no small matter," he said. "I am here for that bit o' paper."

"But I've not got it."

"Who has?"

"I am true to my friends," said Shavers, sullenly. I am no traitor, Mr. Murdock."

"Oh, I see. You passed it on before you posted the lie on your door. Look here, Shavers. Didn't you pass that paper to Jonas Benham, the grocer?"

The constable snarled like a wolf.

"You can't get blood out of a turnip," he grunted. "And in this instance I am the turnip.

"So that's your game?" observed Murdock. "You know the purport of the paper you stole?"

"Perhaps I did."

"It was a plan supposed to lead to Captain Kidd's buried treasure. It was found in the pack which belonged to the old peddler who was recently murdered. By some means you discovered that the boy, Dick Spencer, had possession of the pirate's diagram, and it was that which you took and got a few duck shot in your back for the venture."

"Yes, and I'll settle with the boy later," growled the constable.

"Not till I have finished with you rascals," was the answer. "Now for the paper."

"I swear I haven't got it," asserted Shavers.

"Then when did you pass it on to Jonas Benham?"

"There you're going for the turnip again," laughed the lean-faced constable.

Israel Murdock stepped back a pace.

"Now," said he, "not a word about my coming here. Remember that the old Roberts case is still open. You never settled that one, Mr. Shavers, or 'Lucky Noll,' as they used to call you. I'm going now, and if you forestall my next move, you'll hear the doors of Sing Sing grate behind you. You're never going to lay your dirty fingers upon Captain Kidd's gold. It's good night now. It's Sing Sing if you move from this place within the next twenty-four hours," and then Israel Murdock was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

"IT'S too strange for anything," exclaimed Dick Spencer, the day after his last adventures.

He was addressing Rodney, whom he had unexpectedly encountered.

"What is so strange?" was the pertinent query.

"I've got the old parchment back! It came to me by mail this morning. There was nothing in the envelope but it."

"I'm astounded, Dick. Who has been so accommodating as all that?"

"I cannot say for certain, but I seem to see Detective Murdock's hand in the work."

"If that is true I can't see why he didn't go after the treasure himself."

"He told me that he didn't come to Bloomfield to find Captain Kidd's loot, but to discover who killed Danny Bimm, the peddler."

"And having found the stolen diagram he turns it over to you?"

"That's the way it looks to me," smiled Dick, "and now I will show you what the plan has already revealed to me. It is the strangest discovery of all."

The two boys went to Dick's room, which was darkened, after which a lamp was lit.

"The real clew seems to have been written in invisible ink," continued Dick, as he held the old paper between them and the light. "The flame or the warmth brings out lines and marks which you cannot see otherwise."

"I see!" cried Rodney. "It alters the plan altogether."

"It does nothing else," responded Dick. "I have studied out the newly discovered plan. Here is a rough drawing of a tree and there it says 'rock' as plain as it can."

"Yes, yes."

"The main line passes the rock and stops where the word 'rock' is set down the second time."

"That's plain, too."

"And at the end of the second line is the word 'dig.'"

"And there the loot is!" almost shouted Rodney. "Hurrah! we're on the right trail at last."

"I believe so. Now, tonight we will go prepared to see what is in the new discovery," Dick pursued. "We will know tonight if Captain Kidd buried his gold where this old plan says."

Meantime, in a room on the second floor of Jonas Benham's house, a young fellow, whose eyes were discolored, was munching a repast which had been brought to him on a plate. At a window across the room sat a young girl who now and then stole a glance at the youth, and each time a smile came to her lips. At last the lone diner pushed back the plate.

"I'm not a very pretty specimen of nature," he said, turning to the girl, Alice Gray, at the window. "I was attacked without warning by that young rascal, and but for the advantage he took there would be another story to tell."

"You threw a weight at him, I believe?"

"Yes, after he had dared me to fight by his looks," growled Bosty Shavers.

"Then you committed the assault?" quietly commented the girl.

Bosty frowned.

"I missed my mark by a hair," said he. "Before I could resist he was upon me. You don't seem to pity me, Miss Gray?"

"I must confess that my sympathy is not with you," was the reply.

"What's that?"

Bosty's voice was hard and demonlike. He moved uneasily on his chair.

"I think you understood me," and

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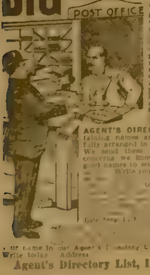

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Alice rose to carry out the remains of the feast.

"I ought to give you a slap for your impertinence," he grated. "You are for Dick Spencer, who would have killed me if Mr. Benham hadn't interfered."

He seized the girl's sleeve, but she broke away and fell back with flaming face.

"Don't touch me further!" she exclaimed. "Your touch is loathsome and I don't invite it."

"You don't, eh?" growled Bosty. "You want Dick to find Captain Kidd's gold, and don't care by what means he reaches the loot?"

"Of course I want him to find the treasure——"

"And thus rob your uncle of the victory."

"Uncle Jonas has enough without looking in the ground for more," smiled the girl.

"But Dick Spencer shall never touch a particle of the treasure!" and Bosty struck the table with his fist. "I'm going to stand between him and it. If I've got to kill him, he shall never dig up the old pirate's treasure."

Alice's face went pale, and she placed the dishes on the table over which she leaned, looking the young villain in the eye.

"You won't kill any one, you miserable coward!" came from her lips in startling tones. "There's not an ounce of good blood in your whole body."

"I'll show you!" rasped Bosty, falling back and then rising to his feet. "That treasure is never to fall into his hands. I swear it on my life!"

"On your life! Pooh!" laughed the girl. "Why don't you go to a photographer's gallery and have your picture taken with that pretty black frame around your eyes?"

This was more than the enraged Bosty could stand. He was on his feet with a hard word on his lips, but as he reached for Alice, she got nimbly out of his way, and snatched a half-devoured potato from the plate.

In another moment the novel weapon had been launched and having been struck fairly in the face by it, Bosty Shavers dropped back into the chair, a spectacle which brought a ringing laugh from the girl. By the time the new clerk had cleaned his face he was alone, but his anger was not abated.

"I'll pay her back for that!" he roared, stamping the carpet in his anger. "I don't care if she is Jonas Benham's ward. I can't more than lose my job."

The twilight came, and then the soft summer night. Little craft were dancing about on the surface of the starlit waters, and a light wind, laden with the mixed fragrance of bay and woodland, came to all.

Dick and Rodney stole from Bloomfield intent upon the work of finding Captain Kidd's treasure, as they believed they had found the right clew by the newly discovered lines on the old plan. They were armed for search and defense, in addition to the digging implements they carried, and they were not afraid.

When the lantern was lighted at the spot which they were certain was the right one, the diagram was brought forth, and the digging begun. Rodney watched while Dick dug. The few words spoken were in whispers, and for some time the treasure hunters toiled unceasingly.

"He must have planted it well," said Rodney.

"I'm down three feet now and the ground seems never to have been disturbed."

"Keep on," Rodney advised. "If we've read the directions aright we will surely find the loot."

Suddenly Dick stopped digging and looked up at his chum.

"I've struck something that is not earth," he said.

"It's the gold chest, no doubt."

Dick turned again to his work, but in another minute he ceased and uttered an ejaculation of triumph.

"Let me have the light," he cried.

The lantern was handed down into the excavation, and Dick seized it.

"Here is an iron chest bound with brass," Rodney heard his companion say. "Now throw down the ropes."

This was speedily done, and Dick began to fasten them about his find. In another moment he stood above the excavation and handed Rodney one end of the rope.

"Now for Captain Kidd's treasure!" he cried. "Pull with all your might, Rodney."

The young treasure hunters braced themselves and began to pull. It was a great task, but they put forth all their energies, and at last something dark appeared above the top of the hole.

"It's Kidd's gold!" almost shouted Rodney.

The iron chest of curious shape was safely landed, and the boys caught their breath.

"Look! It is open a little at one corner!" exclaimed Dick, and thrusting his hand in he drew out a number of gold doubloons.

"Hurrah for the treasure!" shouted Rodney. "The old plan told the truth."

"And it's all ours!"

In another instant there rang thru the wood a voice which seemed to drive every drop of blood from the treasure hunters' bodies.

"Touch that chest and you're dead boys!" it said. "Captain Kidd's loot belongs to us!"

Dick and Rodney looked at each other, their faces showing deathly white in the lantern's gleams.

(Concluded Next Week.)

* * *

CAUSE FOR ALARM.

"I think," said Ploffit, mournfully, "that I'm going to have the grip."

He held one hand against his chest and coughed hollowly. Then he tried to sneeze and failed. It irritated him to realize that the human being does not exist who can look dignified after trying to sneeze and failing.

"Oh, I don't think so," said Mrs. Ploffit, easily.

Her husband regarded her with dismal reproof. "Grip," he reminded her, "sometimes results fatally. I don't wish to frighten you, Isabel, but I have a terrible pain in my back and an ache here, and my head feels queer, and altogether I fear that I am going to be very ill, indeed. However, if I don't go to the office I presume you will reproach me for neglecting properly to provide for my family."

"Why, of course I shouldn't go if I didn't feel equal to it," said Mrs. Ploffit, looking up from her morning paper. "You don't look at all ill."

"I never show it in my face when I am," snapped Ploffit. "I suppose a man can die without hanging out signals of distress, can't he? It's hard not to get a little sympathy in one's own family!"

"You ate too many apples last night," suggested Mrs. Ploffit. "They have upset you. I can't see that you have a cold."

"Well, I've got a terrible one," insisted Ploffit, huffily. "And you never can tell what a cold is going to lead to."

The front door slammed behind Ploffit and Mrs. Ploffit turned to her mail. "What a shame!" she murmured, after reading the first letter.

It was from her old friend, Sally Graham, and it said, incidentally, that Sally's husband had had a nervous breakdown three months before and was still at home. Luckily, the letter added, the Grahams had enough to live on.

"Well," mused Mrs. Ploffit, "George always was a delicate man, as I remember. It's too bad!"

She opened the second letter. This was from Cousin Susie out West. "Henry," wrote Cousin Susie, "has had an awful time. He had pneumonia in the early fall, and has not been the same man since. The doctor says he must go South for the rest of the winter, and what will become of the hardware store I don't know."

"Poor Cousin Henry!" said Mrs. Ploffit, aghast. "What a dreadful thing! And they have four children! What on earth is the trouble with all the men we are acquainted with these days?"

She stared unbelievingly at the last letter. "Dear Isabel," her old college chum wrote. "I've been too busy taking care of Tom to write. He's been in a state of nervous collapse ever since he had that attack of the grip in——"

"Grip," breathed Mrs. Ploffitt, wildly. She had not paid much attention to Ploffit's wails because he always wailed if he so much as pricked his thumb. But maybe—was it possible he was going to be ill? Grip left a person so fagged out—look at George and Cousin Henry and Tom——

"I wonder where I put that cough medicine?" Mrs. Ploffit said, as she rummaged contritely thru the medicine cabinet. "I fear I acted in a heartless way when poor John was telling me how he felt. If he gets pneumonia he'll die, because he's so fat, and fat men always have a hard time of it when they have pneumonia. If he has grip it's likely to kill him, because it can affect any part of the body. Where—where are those mustard plasters?"

Three times Mrs. Ploffit started to telephone Ploffit to find out how much worse he had grown, and three times she desisted because she said that there was no use to frighten him.

"It's probably all he can do to sit up," she told herself, reproachfully. "Oh, why was I so brutal?"

When Ploffit's step was heard on the porch that evening his wife flew to the door before he could get out his latchkey.

"Come right upstairs, John," she said in the soothing, hushed tone one uses in the presence of a desperate case. "I have the tub filled with hot water, and then you can have a hot lemonade as soon as you get into bed. And I've filled the atomizer and have a mustard plaster ready and had the drug store send in that prescription we used last time, tho I think that probably it would be best to have the doctor——"

"What on earth are you talking about, Isabel?" Ploffit demanded.

"Why, you're sick!" said his wife, indignantly.

"Sick nothing!" roared Ploffit. "I never felt better in my life and I've got tickets in the fourth row for a good show tonight. Is dinner ready?"

"Well, I must say," declared Mrs. Ploffit, stiffly, "that you are a very disobliging man. When I do anything for you again you'll know it!"

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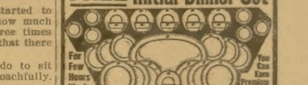
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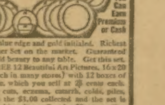

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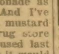

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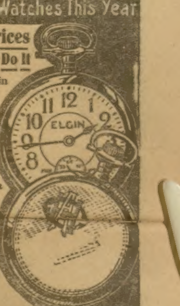

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A Movie Detective.

(Continued from Page Seventeen)

kindness she had simulated so often on the stage.

"It would be my great pleasure, Mr. Syde," she said, "to have you retain, as a reminder of an unhappy woman, the little gem that you have in your hand. It is not much, but it will serve."

Gasp followed gasp about the room. Superintendent Bray rushed forward protesting. Even Grant Grange, up to this time silent, gave evidence of his incredulity. And Ti Syde stood there smiling calmly, as tho the great actress had not just made him the present of a fortune.

"I am indeed grateful," he said, bowing. "It is the gift that I had in mind, and, Miss Hayden, I felt that I did not have to tell you in so many words just what I wanted. You caught my point."

"But," shouted Superintendent Bray, "that is ridiculous! I shall not allow Miss Hayden to give that priceless jewel even to my friend."

"He asked for something worthless," said Helen, smiling at the detective. "I have given it to him. And I might ask how long he has known that it is worthless?"

"Ever since I found it in the taxi," replied Ti. "Even in the darkness when I saw it beneath the rays of my searchlight and discovered that it was an imitation I could not repress my admiration for the perfection of the imitation. I almost doubted my senses, and I remember distinctly giving expression to the word 'Wonderful!'"

"This," and Helen took from her neck the chain from which hung the jewel she had that morning worn, calling it an imitation of the one that had been stolen from her, "this is the real thing. I had the copy made some time ago to wear here at the studio—it is perfect. That which Mr. Syde holds in his hand is the imitation—the thing I put in Grant Grange's pocket. Do you think that I would have risked losing this?"

"But it is most valuable to me," said Ti. "And now I believe that nothing remains except to take Mr. Blake to prison for stealing an imitation gem. In this case the law cannot punish for the intent—the fact that he thought he was stealing the real thing will not add to his sentence. By the way, Miss Hayden, how much did it cost to have the copy made?"

"Six dollars," returned the girl.

"Yes," murmured Ti, "it's petit larceny all right."

"And you're the darnedest man to play a practical joke on a chap I ever saw," grumbled Superintendent Bray.

While Bray and the others, relieved of the tension of the previous moments, were talking and laughing over the surprising turn affairs had taken, Helen Hayden was listening to the earnestly spoken words of her newspaper friend.

"It would be the making of me," he was whispering, "and you would forget all this unpleasantness. And, dear, after all, there is more life than seeking and receiving the applause of the public. Let's get away from it all—if only for a little while, and see if we can't bring back the simple pleasures—together."

The room was quiet now. Everybody seemed to be waiting for something and no one knew just what. Helen Hayden sat with bowed head, thinking.

Suddenly she rose, and all eyes were upon her. Never had she looked so beautiful. Little Madge, who had moved from her, stood close to Grant Grange, and to her heart came repeated the forgiveness she had spoken.

"Mr. Bray," said Helen, "I can't try to tell you how ashamed I am. You have all made it very easy for me, who deserved nothing but contempt from you. But now I want to say that I shan't renew my contract. I'm going away—we," and she took the hand of the man by her side, "we are going to start over, and we ask that you wish us good luck and—the right kind of happiness."

"But," stammered Superintendent Bray, "but we need you, Miss Hayden. We can't get along without our leading woman."

The great actress crossed the room to the place where little Madge was standing, tears streaming down her cheeks. She took the girl's hand in hers and spoke softly.

"Here, Mr. Bray," she said, "is your new leading woman. Let her take my place—and let me go away and try to learn how to be half as great and true and pure as she is."

In the silence that followed only the deep breathing of men and women could be heard.

Then forward stepped Grant Grange. In his he took the other hand of the little actress as he gazed into her eyes.

"And now before you all," he said, low, "I beg of her that she will let me be her leading man—always."

The End.

* * *

CHARACTER READINGS.

When you hear a woman talking
 Of a soul that should be free
And a prisoned spirit walking
 In its cell, bereft of glee;
When she says that her endeavor
 To be thoughtful, kind, and good
She discovers is forever
 Being quite misunderstood,
You can take it without question
 That she couldn't broil a steak,
And her folks have indigestion
 From the things she tries to bake.

When you hear a man declaring
 That his luck is always tough,
And remark in tones despairing
 That this world is all a bluff;
When with egotistic scolding
 That is trying to the nerves
He says fortune is withholding
 The reward that he deserves,
You can bet he is bestowing
 Every nickel that he gets
Where the beverage is flowing
 Thru a haze of cigarettes.

* * *

THE ALARM CLOCK.

"How do I look?" inquired Miss McCarthy as she circled about in front of the mirror in the rest-room.

"You look fierce, Mame," said Miss Tillman with an obvious effort. "That color makes you look like a ripe squash.

"Well!" exclaimed Miss McCarthy, stiffening angrily. "Of all the nerve! If you can't think of something polite to say, Jen Tillman, you'd just about as well keep still. I don't know that I care about being talked so rude to."

"I didn't mean to be rude, Mame," rejoined Miss Tillman humbly. "It's only just that when it comes to fibs I'm on the water wagon."

"You!" shrilled Miss McCarthy, forgetting her indignation in her astonishment. "Since when, please?"

"Since last evening. I found out it ain't healthy for me to lie."

"Go on and tell it," said Miss McCarthy.

"You remember that young man I told you about who looks and acts so awkward?" asked Miss Tillman. "Well, I've been trying to dodge him for the last couple of months. Still, when it comes to candy and flowers and such things he's a wonder. He was just crazy to take me somewhere, but I simply couldn't stand the thought of going any place with a fellow that looks so hayseedy.

"I kept putting him off until last week, and then he got so determined about my taking dinner downtown with him and going to a show afterward that, honest, there didn't seem to be a thing more that I could say against it. Finally I just said I would go Wednesday night. Then he asks where would I meet him, and I says I'd meet him on such and such a corner, having no more idea of doing it than anything. I thought I'd pretend afterward that I couldn't get away from work until it was too late, or something.

"Well, nothing would do Wednesday morning but that I should bring down pa's alarm clock to get it fixed. It had quit work and pa loves his clocks better than he does his folks. So that night, when I was ready to go home, I beat it over to the car with the alarm clock under my arm. Well, who should I see at the very corner where I was going to get on the car but Joe, the fellow I promised to meet there!

"Thinks I to myself, 'Here's where you get yours, all right.' But I sneaked around back of the crowd and got in the car. Then that foolish, weak-minded alarm clock actually began to ring! Honest, I never felt so funny in my life. Here was little me, all tucked in behind a fat woman and my face all covered up with my hat, and there was the alarm clock yelling its head off! I got off that car in a hurry, at the same corner, the clock still ringing."

"Oh, gee!" said Miss McCarthy. "Did the Joe fellow hear it?"

"Hear it?" repeated Miss Tillman. "I should say he did. And he wasn't the only one. Before it got thru I think everybody in the world heard it. Everybody began laughing and crowding up to see what was going on, and just about the time a policeman was trying to get in to see what was the matter Joe came up."

"Aw, say, wasn't that too bad?" cried Miss McCarthy, sympathetically.

"Well, to tell you the truth," admitted Miss Tillman, "he looked kind of good to me then, for once in his life."

"But how did you get out of going to dinner with him?" queried Miss McCarthy.

"I didn't get out of it. I didn't seem to have any spirit left in me. I just went.

"To tell you the truth," went on Miss Tillman after a moment's pause, "I've done worse things in my life. That fellow certainly does know how to show a girl a good time. We had a swell dinner, and then we took in the best show in town and there were roses and a box of candy to take home with me. Joe certainly does know how to treat a girl. And he's smart," concluded Miss Tillman. "He knew I didn't want to go places with him and coming home he asked me why. And I told him."

"Gee, you never did!" ejaculated Miss McCarthy. "What did he say?"

"He asked me to go with him and help him to pick out some real swell clothes, and I'm going," rejoined Miss Tillman, defiantly.

Miss McCarthy curved her hand back of her ear and leaned forward as if listening.

"Ting-a-ling-ling!" she chirped. "I hear that alarm clock tuning up to play the wedding march."

* * *

No Change.

Percy Mackaye, dramatist and stanch champion of the ideals of the theater, tells about the wonderful memory of one of his friends. This friend it seems, very rarely forgets any one who has ever been introduced to him. There was, however, one occasion when his memory failed him.

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"The young man replied immediately: "'Oh, he's still dead.'"

* * *

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* * *

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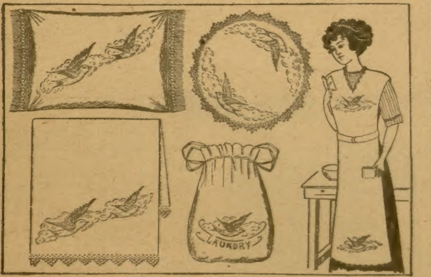


Bluebird Embroidery Designs.

Bluebird subjects are entirely different from set flowers, fruits, and conventional designs, which have been used in the past few seasons: They are taking precedence over all other designs for their popularity. Every one of the articles shown above, even to the Fudge Apron, showing the two birds, is tinted in artistic and beautiful shades of blue, and the lines to be worked are in black.

THE LAUNDRY BAG DESIGN is tinted on oatmeal cloth, size 17x25 inches. Included with each are six skeins of colored floss for working. Will be sent for $2.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or Ledger.

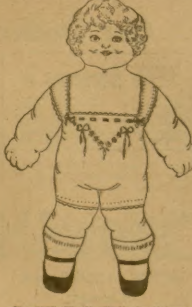
THE PILLOW TOP DESIGN is tinted on oatmeal cloth, size 17x21 inches. Included with each are a back and six skeins of floss for working. Will be sent for $1.50 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or the Ledger.

THE CENTERPIECE DESIGN is tinted on oatmeal cloth, size 25 x25 inches. Included with each are six skeins of floss for working. Will be sent for $1.50 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or Ledger.

THE SCARF DESIGN is tinted on oatmeal cloth, size 17x50 inches. Included with each are six skeins of floss for working. The scarf will be forwarded to any one sending $2.00 in subscriptions, new or renewal, to either the Blade or the Ledger.

THE FUDGE APRON DESIGN is tinted on white art cloth. Regular ¾ length slip-over style. Included with each are four skeins of floss for working. The apron will be sent without cost for a year's subscription, new or renewal, at $1.00, to either the Blade or the Ledger.

NO. 5027, DOLLS IN COLORS ON MUSLIN—Cutey is 17 inches tall, and her baby is 6½ inches tall. They are the finest playmates any little girl could wish for. The limbs are movable and they can't be broken; you can bend them around and drop them without hurting. If you are a little girl or boy, have your mother or father send for these dollies right away, or if you have a friend who has a birthday soon, they will more than please her. Cutey and her baby come on one sheet of heavy cloth, in beautiful colors, ready to sew up and stuff; we also include a stamped design dress for Cutey, with enough floss for working. Thousands of little ones all over the country have been made happy with Cutey and her baby. Both dolls in colors given for a year's subscription, new or renewal, to either The Saturday Blade or the Chicago Ledger, for $1.00.



No. 5027, Muslin Dolls in Colors.

* * *

Silenced.

He had held forth for so long on the subject of his adventures that the entire smoking-room was distinctly bored. Finally he reached India. "It was there that I first saw a man-eating tiger," he announced boastfully.

"Pooh! That's nothing," said a mild-looking little man, edging toward the door. "I once saw a man eating rabbit." And he sauntered gracefully out.

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Grow this delicious vegetable in 3 to 4 weeks by the French method. Hot bed not essential. Plat 6 by 3 feet feeds family of five—and some left to sell. Bring $5.00 to $10.00 per dozen bunches in the city in winter. Least trouble. Have this profit and pleasure at the expense of

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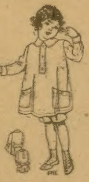
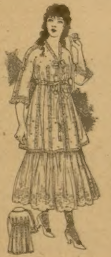
The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

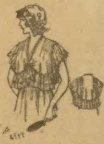
We have a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. Read our splendid offer below.



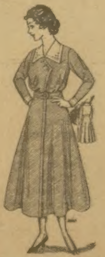
8941 Boy's Suit.
2 to 6 years.



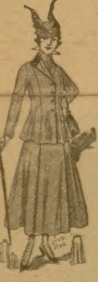
8939 Dressing Jacket for Misses and Small Women.
16 and 18 years.



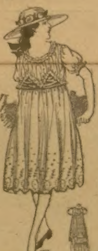
8944 Dressing Jacket and Cap. Small 34 or 36, Medium 38 or 40, Large 42 or 44 bust.



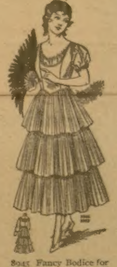
8947 One-Piece Dress for Misses and Small Women.
16 and 18 years.



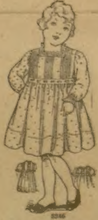
8929 Short Coat.
34 to 42 bust.
8926 Four-Piece Skirt.
24 to 34 waist.



8938 Girl's Dress,
8 to 14 years.



8945 Fancy Bodice for Misses and Small Women.
16 and 18 years.
8932 Flounced Skirt for Misses and Small Women.
16 and 18 years.



8946 Child's Dress,
1, 2, 4 and 6 years.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

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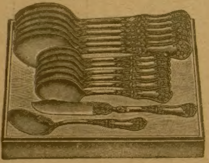
Silver Set Free



We offer Silver Sets free in our Bargain Book—the most beautiful pattern you ever saw, in Knives and Forks and Spoons.

We don't ask you to sell things or to spend any time. We simply ask for your good will. We want you to have a full set in your home as a constant reminder of us.

This offer will come with our Bargain Book. The silver isn't for sale. It is simply for gifts. Let us tell you how to get it.

Your Own Terms–1 to 3 Years Time

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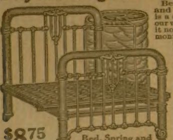


$8.75

Bed, Spring and Mattress

Bed, Spring and Mattress is a sample of our values. Get it now. Pay 90c monthly after a month's trial.

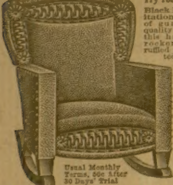
Iron Bed is striking in design, with 1 1-16 inch corner posts and top rails. All fillingrods are 5-16 of an inch thick. Bed is made of best quality Bessemer steel and stands 57½ inches at head end and 38½ inches at foot end. Comes in 4 ft. 6 in. size only. **Colors:** White, apple or our famous Vernis Martin all-gold finish. **Steel Frame Spring** is extra strong link fabric. **Mattress** is well made with good cotton top, nicely tufted and covered with extra quality ticking. Shipping weight of outfit, about 130 lbs.

No. H4B6073. Price, bed, spring, mattress **$8.75**

No. H4B6074. Price, bed only.................. $4.80

Send No Money for this Rocker

Try for 30 Days!



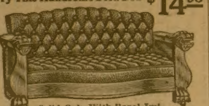
Usual Monthly Terms, 50c After 30 Days' Trial

Black Royal Imitation Leather of guaranteed quality is used in this handsome rocker, prettily ruffled and rosetted as shown. The seat is large and roomy, heavily upholstered over a full setting of springs. The entire frame is extra heavy. Rocker measures 37½ inches from the floor. The shapely back is 28 inches high from top of seat. Seat is 19x19 inches. Weight about 65 lbs.

No. 50H4B240. Price..... .... **$5.45**

Send No Money for a Month

Try This Handsome Sofa Bed $14.95



Solid Oak, With Royal Imitation Leather Upholstering

If You Order from This Paper you may pay the usual monthly terms of $1.25 after 30 days' trial. Richly carved frame is solid oak. Extra broad arms are decorated with carved dragon heads. Front posts are extra heavy, with carved claw feet. Side panels are full length and of extra strength.

Broad Seat and Back are upholstered in black royal imitation leather, neatly diamond tufted over full setting of oil-tempered springs. Is easily changed into a comfortable bed, measuring 72 inches long and 44 inches wide.

No. 28H4B248. Price.............. ... **$14.95**

Seamless Wilton Velvet Rug

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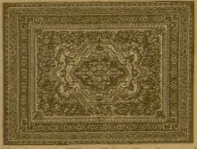

This Seamless Wilton Velvet Rug is unusually well made. If you keep it after 30 days pay $1.50, the usual monthly terms. Comes in a beautiful tan floral medallion pattern. Rug is wool faced and extra close woven, with soft, high nap, and is seamless. A sample of our bargain values.

No. H4C800. Size 9x12 feet. Price....**$15.95**

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Most of our customers are wage earners. They get their wages regularly and they prefer to pay a little each month.

But many wish to pay in other ways. Farmers, for instance, like to pay when they sell their crops.

So we let each customer make his own terms. Simply say when you wish to pay. Say what is convenient—when you will have the money—and our terms will be made to suit. Quarterly payments, if your money comes in that way, will serve as well as monthly payments.

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We sell home things on longer time than ever was given before. Our terms run from one to three years. But on small bills, usually, we like to have payments completed in a year.

Our wish is to suit your convenience. Simply tell us how and when you wish to pay. We have no collectors. When payments are due, by your own terms, send them to us by mail.

Our Dollar Book Free

5175 Bargains in

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